





NEW HUMOROUS WORK ON THE STAGE.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

The Thespian Papers.

Dedicated, by Special Permission, to
MISS MARY ANDERSON.

BY NEVILLE LYNN,

FELLOW, SCOTTISH SOCIETY OF LITERATURE AND ART.

1887.

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Secretary in London of "The Association of Elocutionists."
TEACHER OF ELOCUTION AND GESTURE.

Their Parts Read with Professionals and Amateurs.

RIENZI'S ADDRESS (marked with emphasis, pauses and gestures).—M. Legouvé, one of the Committee of the Conservatoire National de Musique et de Déclamation, Paris, and who was elocution teacher of those three illustrious actresses, Mars, Rachel, and Ristori, writes :—" Il est évident que la gesticulation peut s'enseigner comme l'intonation. L'exemple que vous citez du discours de 'Rienzi' me paraît renfermer des indications justes."

THE SPANISH MOTHER (dittô).—Mr. E. S. Willard, the distinguished actor, writes : " I congratulate you most heartily upon the success with which you have treated a very difficult subject."

HAMLET'S SOLILOQUY.—"The marking with inflexions, emphasis, &c., is very carefully done, and any reciter who follows the directions will be saved from some common blunders."—*Literary World*.

"Some capital hints on articulation and pronunciation are given this month in *The Reciter and Speaker* by Rupert Garry, whose article on the subject is well worth reading by reciters and vocalists.—*The Stage*.

"In *The Reciter*, Mr. Rupert Garry gives some good advice, not altogether superfluous to reciters, which some of them might, perhaps, take to heart with advantage to themselves."—*West Sussex Gazette*

"In the September number of *The Reciter and Speaker*, which fully maintains its reputation, Mr. Garry lays down precise rules for the guidance of elocutionary students, the physiological reasons he gives for some of his remarks being very sensible and to the point."—*The Stage*.

"Mr. Garry proved himself an able elocutionist."—*South London Press*.

"An article on gesture, specially valuable."—*Somerset County Herald*.

Etc., etc.,

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The

Thespian

Papers,

BEING A SERIES OF HUMOROUS ESSAYS
ON SUBJECTS OF PROFESSIONAL AND
AMATEUR DRAMATIC INTEREST.

BY

NEVILLE LYNN, F.S.L.A.

LONDON :

WALTER SCOTT,

24, WARWICK LANE, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1887.

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c

To
MISS MARY ANDERSON
IN TRUE ADORATION
OF
AN IDEAL WOMANHOOD
THESE ESSAYS
ARE GRATEFULLY DEDICATED.



PREFACE.

THE production of numerous articles from my pen, in the London Dramatic Press, has furnished my implacable friends with an excuse for inducing me to worship at the shrine of volume-publication.

As many of the papers were on current events and matters of momentary professional interest, I have ventured to replace them with others of a more general character and which now appear for the first time.

From the beginning, I decided, not without fear and trembling, to endeavour to dispense with the details, quotations, legends and learned minutiae that have combined to render the Literature of the Stage second only to a Chancery suit of the "Jarndyce and Jarndyce" description; and I, therefore, sincerely tender my sympathies to any who may possibly purchase this issue under the impression that it is an Encyclopædia Dramatica or a Theatrical Thesaurus.

PREFACE.

To Miss Mary Anderson, whose brilliant talents as an actress, whose physical ideality, and whose high intellectual attainments are the favourite themes of the poet, the sculptor and the essayist, I have no language sufficiently eloquent to express my gratitude for her permission to inscribe this issue with her name.

I gladly take this opportunity of publicly thanking my old and valued friend and fellow-playgoer, Mr. Rupert Garry, for his kindness in revising the proofs of this edition, in weeding out possibly libellous matter and in furnishing me with much interesting information during our many pleasant nocturnal rambles,

My sincerest thanks are especially due to the Editors of the *Dramatic Review* and *The Dramatic Reciter & Speaker*, etc., for the reprinting of the several articles originally published under their auspices; and, in conclusion, I can only commend these rambling reviews to the kindest indulgence of all into whose hands they may chance to fall.

Merrille Lyrm

September 1, 1887

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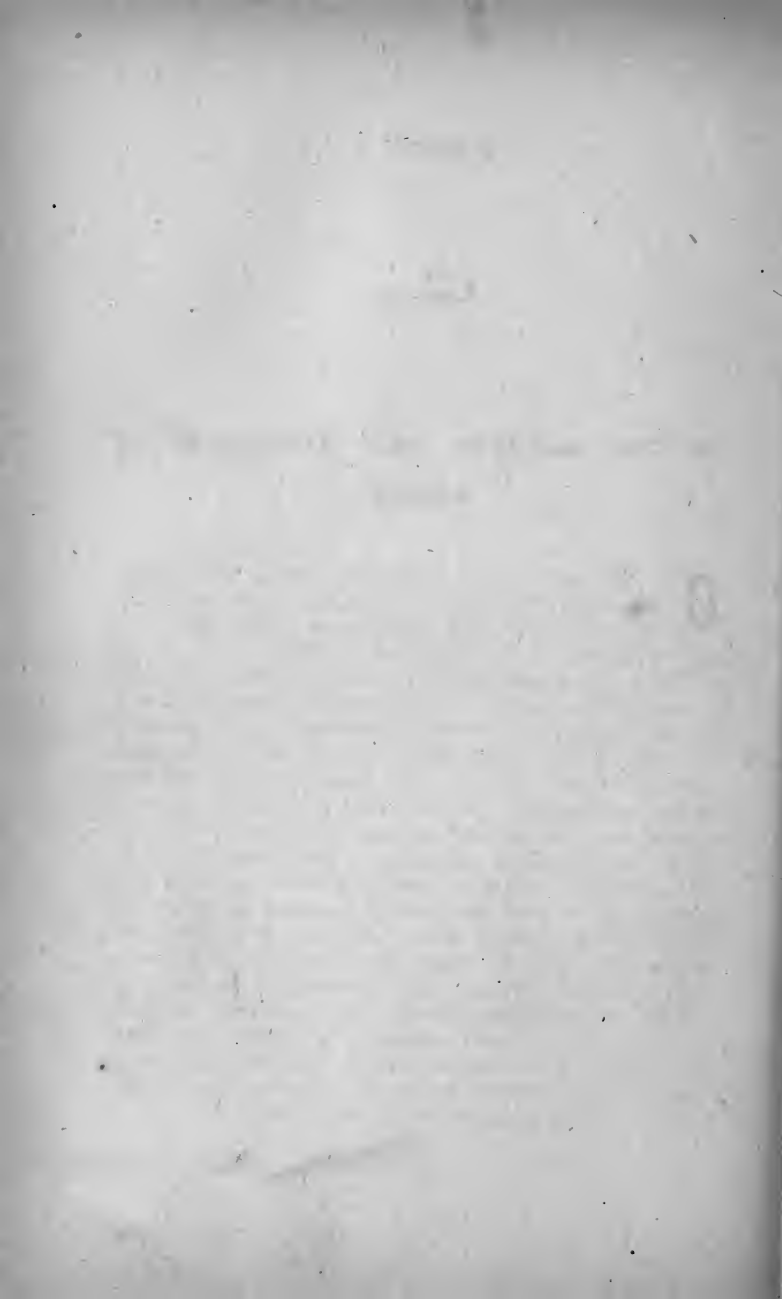


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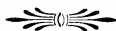
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PART I.



ON THE HARMONY AND EXPRESSION OF MOTION.

ON July 31st, 1886, it was my proud and happy privilege to hear Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Russell, of New York, lecture, at Drury Lane, on the "Harmony and Expression of Motion."

The lecturers are disciples of the Delsarte system of universal illustration, which contends that every sentiment, should be so clearly expressed by the gestures with which it is accompanied, as almost to dispense with utterance. To do this, however, it is, unfortunately, necessary in the first place, to feel the emotion you express ; so that when you say to some old bore of an acquaintance whom you unexpectedly meet : "How are you, old boy, I am *so* glad to see you," you express the felicity with which you are possessed by the following physical actions, dictated by your mental satisfaction. Firstly, your eyes dilate with pleasure and beam joyfully on the unwelcome person ; secondly, the hand-grip conveys a pleasurable thrill of honest greeting and unutterable happiness ; and thirdly, your whole frame from the Gibus to the pumps, echoes with swaying harmony, to the sentiment expressed. All this, however, is but natural !

It certainly follows that, if you are honestly delighted to see a friend, your look and your words manifest the emotion ; but it is somewhat peculiar to think that you should study your pleasurable antics before the pier-glass, to ascertain whether, or not, you æsthetically express your enthusiasm. There must be no hesitation or *gaucherie*, but every action must conform to harmony, and every limb must move in flexible obedience to each modulation of tone. How delicious this is ! We are no longer to offer our visitor a chair as if we wished it might crumble beneath his weight, or as if we were motioning him to place his head upon the fatal block ; but, with a gracious inclination, we make a sweepingly rounded motion of the arm and a delicate flexion of the elbow, which, together with a veiled fervency in the attitude of the fingers, harmonises exactly with the uttered invitation.

When on a race or regatta day the train is full, and a perspiring fair one enters your already over-occupied compartment, you will no longer stagger to your feet with awkward sheepishness and, with a hectic flush and faltering utterance, exclaim “ W—won’t you sit down——?” ; but, with the proud consciousness of a thorough Delsartian training, you will rise, calmly and heroically, and with tender, impassioned gesture, will proffer the invitation in the ardor of pathetic solicitude, and in the language of the most confirmed æsthete. Then if your fellow-travellers don’t look extremely impressed but somewhat astounded, you may be sure you have made a slight mistake, either in the getting up, the expressive facial action, the illustrative gestures, or the accent of invitation.

Before I was converted to the Delsarte system I was most awkward. In offering any one a match, I invariably burnt their fingers ; in passing on an umbrella I always stuck it into the fleshy part of the recipient ; and when accepting a glass of alcoholic stimulants, gave my generous host the impression that I had

never handled a tumbler before. Now, all is changed, and I can pass a match without burning any one's fingers save my own ; I can assist a lady on with her cloak without either smothering her, or lifting her off her feet ; and I can imbibe liquids without spilling more than half the contents of the glass.

To prove how hard it is to be really graceful, I will politely ask the reader to tear himself away from these pages for a few minutes, and to endeavour to convey, by gesture, an affectionate desire that an imaginary person should occupy a given chair. It will be found that the hand will either curl up into a meaningless mass of flesh and bone, or it will indignantly assert the possession of its five fingers by spreading them out in a fan-like form peculiarly affected by small and impudent boys when forming an extension to the nasal organ, or else the fingers will mould themselves in an attitude admirably adapted for scratching purposes.

That is the hand alone. Then if the glass be consulted, it will generally be found that the shoulder will be humped, the head awry and the eyes indicative of intense corporal agony.

To be truly graceful, there should be a lissom mobility in every limb, and it is only when the form is sufficiently flexible that the emotions of rapture, ecstasy, tenderness, pain, fear and solicitude can be adequately expressed. Then we shall palpitate, glow, throb, tingle, thrill and pulsate in accordance with the Delsarte system, which asserteth that every motion of every limb should convey as distinct a meaning as spoken words.

For the benefit of naturally awkward people, however, a series of calisthenic exercises have been invented which are calculated to render the limbs flexible and mobile, so that they may be correspondingly adequate to harmoniously express the feelings of which the mind is possessed. Mrs. Edmund Russell strongly advocated freer use of the shoulder, which should be

most expressive ; and it is noticeable that on the continent the "shrug " conveys a vast variety of emotions and is much in action.

Indeed from lack of use, the shoulder becomes almost immovable and I have personally seen a scapula connected by ossified ligament to the clavicle so that any movement of that particular shoulder was rendered impossible.

The calisthenic exercises mentioned are a violent squirmy motion of the hands (pendant from the wrists) which tends to make the carpus and phalanges pliable and obedient to every motion. Another is a peculiar worm-like wriggle introducing the whole arm, and to acquire which takes people from six hours to a fortnight according to their mental capabilities. Then, ——— but, I am not a Professor.

O, ye actors who bow like puppets ; ye actresses who move like models, learn æsthetic physical culture, and give your audiences reason to bless this article, and the professors of Delsarte's "Harmony and Expression of Motion."

BARN-THEATRES.

SOME forty years ago, the species of dramatic entertainment enacted at what I have taken the liberty to call the Barn-Theatre, was very popular. Most country towns boasted their barns, where the strolling-player used to act when he made his annual or bi-annual call. The plays which saw the light in these places were of the good old blood-for-blood-and-as-much-of-it-as-you-like sort of character, in which some one was tied to a water-mill or cut up by machinery to slow and thrilling music, as evoked by the intelligent pianist, who constituted the orchestra. After the good person had been got out of the way in the first act, and got in the way in the second, and mixed up again in the third, the fourth act had still more revelations, ending, of course, in the dear old villainy-vanquished-and-virtue-victorious-style ; all being united and blessing and kissing each other within twenty-five seconds of the fall of the curtain ; the villain in the meantime regarding them with humped back, sunken chin and glaring eyes, which is the proper sort of thing for the villain to do when he is handed over to the detectives, who invariably tumble in at the last.

Another style very much in favour, was the nautical drama, introducing a sort of Blood-stained-Bill, the Boy-Buccaneer-of-the-Bounding-Baltic ruffian, who used to indulge in a sailor's hornpipe and duets with the persecuted maiden. Then there were the Buccaneer's soliloquies, *à la* "Once on board the lugger—r—r" (three r's please, Mr. Printer), "the gyurl—l—l IS MINE!" which of course used to fetch down the house. The "gyurl—l—l" was generally represented by an antique female of about sixty, who wore her—or what the property-man supplied—hair down in a *dégagé* style. It was a magnificent sight when the burly ruffian caught up this poor young thing (presumably on the way to the "lugger—r—r") to the accompaniment of heart-rending yells from the maiden. Then people in the back rows used to show their opinion by shouting, "Bravo, Liza,"—Liza, by the way, was the name of the heroine—and, "Give it 'er, Bill!" in a most demonstrative way. And when Bill and Liza were just gracefully going off R, the stage-carpenter, or some "super," used to thrust forward about a "ha'porth" of red-fire, which nearly suffocated Liza—as we could tell by her unsuccessfully suppressed coughs—and stank the place out. Truly it was a glorious sight!

Then there was the classical drama. We will say it was *Julius Cæsar*. This is how it was done. Act——? Well, I won't give the act, as I am inclined to think that the version presented at the Barn-Theatre I now allude to was not the correct Shakespearian version. Cæsar L. Enter a "super" R. I don't really know who he was supposed to be, so leave you to guess. New-comer makes extraordinary obeisance, and delivers himself as follows:

"Imperial Cæsar, the harmy awaits thy command."

Cæsar.—"Ho, 'tis well. Are they without?"

New-comer (with another duck, this time nearly whacking his head against the boards). "Your grace ! They har."

Cæsar.—"Let them happroach !"

So much for the dialogue. The new-comer then shuffled off, presumably with the purpose of looking out for the army, getting them together, and walking them on. After a lapse of about five minutes—during which "Imperial Cæsar" regarded the pianoforte player with savage eyes, the pianoforte player continually abstracting some liquid from a black bottle, by protracted adhesion of his lips to the spout of the aforesaid bottle—a terribly discordant blast was heard, and in walked a "herald" with a forbidding-looking brass instrument—I think it was something between a trombone and a key bugle—applied to his mouth from which he extracted the appalling sound referred to. The herald himself was attired in a Harry the Eighth Beefeater suit, and was followed in due course of time by the army, who entered with imposing solemnity. We waited till they all got in, when they ranged at back after performing a gracious-looking curtsy to the "imperial" gentleman, who was still casting longing eyes at the black bottle of the accompanist. The hybrid trombone-key-bugle instrument having left off, we inspected the army, while the orchestra struck up the "Campbells are coming!"—the troops keeping time with their feet. The army, after a careful inspection, proved to consist of two supers, one of whom was attired in Lincoln green *à la* Robin Hood, and the other in a blanket sort of garment which hung down before and behind. Perhaps—I timidly throw out the suggestion for the benefit of my readers—it was a "tabard." I watched the entrance door for some time, hoping against hope that the two specimens of "august Cæsar's proud array," whom I recognised as roughs belonging to the town, were only *avant courriers*, and

expecting that the doors would suddenly be flung open and a legion of well appointed supers would appear. But they didn't come. Further comments would, I feel, be unkind, so leave the dramatic representation of *Julius Cæsar* for the present. A description of the scenery I would also omit from conscientious motives. But here goes for the four sets of scenes. 1. "The deepest dungeon 'neath the castle moat," duly equipped with instruments of torture and fetters of astonishing make. 2. A piece of water which would "do for" a mill pond, the Thames by moonlight, a puddle, or a stagnant ditch. 3. An interior, which would "do for" anything from "Amy's Garrett in Seven Dials," to the banqueting-hall in the Baron's Castle; and, lastly, a country lane, which would do equally well for a potato field as for a nobleman's garden or a tennis-lawn. Perhaps in the second drama they would want a "howling-wilderness" scene in America. Such trifling difficulties are, however, very easily surmounted. Take the lower half of the "Thames by moonlight," and stick it on to the upper half of the nobleman's garden, and "there you are!" The most effective stage-situations go down well at the Barn-Theatre. The revolving windmill, the Sweeney-Todd business, the Knight of the Road and the breech-loader, are favourite agents. When the heroine is secured with cords to the railway-track in the sight of the approaching train, and her sweetheart and the villain energetically "go for" each other by the side of the rails, *oh, c'est magnifique!*—or when some one is consigned shrieking to the mighty deep—which is represented by the "Thames by moonlight"—or when the hero is bound to a tree and pot-shots taken at him by the unvirtuous person, the enthusiasm of the house is at its highest. Then there is the favourite "house a-fire," and the scene in the dungeon where the doomed individual is pressed to death to the music originally written for the Simoon scene on the Sahara!

Then—but enough. The good old Barn-Theatre—where even burlesque, in the immemorial tights, was tolerated—is now almost extinct, and the descendants, or rather contemporaries, of “James Montarney, the Tragedian,” are but few. If anybody knows a Latin quotation on the decay of strolling actors, he can put it here, and thus make a decent finale to “Barn-Theatres.”

NATURE IN SCENIC EFFECTS.

LEANING well back in a *Fauteuil*, I was weary and ill at ease, For a play was proceeding before me, That didn't my fancy please ; It made me so awfully sleepy, That I very nearly snored, When at last o'er my brain came flashing, The key to this great big fraud.

The fraud was that, out of a dozen and more scenes, all were interiors, and the jaded eye looked in vain, at each raising of the curtain, for the plashing fountains, the cool grot, the dreamily waving boughs and leaves of a forest set, or for the rippling waters bathed in the light of lime. Nature makes a wonderful difference in the popularity of scenic effects. Load the eye with gorgeous dresses, with magnificent ballets, and with sumptuous interiors ; it yet aches for the delicious sight of the dainty green banks and the azure skies ; and the ear turns with relief from recording barbaric sounds, to the tinkling fall of a rivulet of real water placed at the back of the stage. The performance I speak of was lavishly mounted, the vocalists were eminent, the danseuses were noted, and all that could please the eye was there ; save those little patches of paint, that recall to our minds those glorious days at Naples, that fortnight in the Scilly Isles, those few fleeting hours of sunshine last week at Brighton, and a thousand and one ravishing memories of the dainty skies, the luscious

landscapes, and the halcyon moments spent in their contemplation. I spurn the soulless, heartless critic; let him be a living breathing man, with all his righteous passions, all his sympathies and all his glorious emotions. He that cannot revel in the beauties of nature, who cannot bathe in her sunniest smiles, is a brutish animal, a human pig wallowing in the refuse of his mind; a creature unfit the God-given name of man.

Shakespeare, the greatest of English dramatists, realised the place of nature, with all the force of his giant soul. He studied her, he quoted her, he rejoiced in her capricious and fanciful phantasies, he sang aloud to her, and in his dramas she is accorded the foremost place.

My old friend, Alfred J. Weyman, F.R.G.S., F.S.L.A., has classified the comedies of Shakespeare, indicating the number of scenes devoted to nature in each, as followeth:—

| | Scenes. | Actual Scenes. | Scenes devoted to Nature. |
|-------------------------------|---------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| The Tempest ... | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| The Two Gentlemen of Verona | 19 | 11 | 3 |
| Merry Wives of Windsor ... | 23 | 11 | 5 |
| Measure for Measure ... | 16 | 11 | — |
| Comedy of Errors ... | 11 | 2 | — |
| Much Ado About Nothing | 16 | 8 | 1 |
| Love's Labour Lost ... | 9 | 4 | 3 |
| A Midsummer Night's Dream | 10 | 5 | 2 |
| Merchant of Venice ... | 19 | 8 | 2 |
| As You Like It ... | 21 | 6 | 5 |
| Taming of the Shrew ... | 14 | 11 | 1 |
| All's Well that Ends Well ... | 23 | 12 | 2 |
| Twelfth Night ... | 18 | 6 | 2 |
| A Winter's Tale ... | 14 | 12 | 2 |
| TOTAL ... | 221 | 111 | 32 |

Of these 32 scenes devoted to nature, 5 are gardens, 2 are fields, 3 are different views of a luxurious and uncultivated island, 5 represent different views of two

forests, 2 are different views of Windsor Park, 3 are views of a park in Navarre, 2 are different views of a wood. Then we have an orchard, a lawn, a sea coast, a desert country near the sea, a road leading to a shepherd's cottage, a scene without the walls of Florence. and one also without the Florentine Camp, a heath with an alehouse on it, an avenue and a ship in a storm of thunder and lightning.

And how insignificant our fights and quarrels, our houses on fire, and our ordinary incidents seem, even on the stage, when contrasted with the mighty war of the elements, the earthquake, the avalanche and the storm.

Not only would we say to managers and playwrights, "What is prettier, and what is grander?" but we would say "What is more effective, what goes down better, than the representation of Nature in any of her innumerable and matchless glories?"

AMATEUR ACTING.

AMATEUR acting has, of late years, progressed so much and so deservedly in public favor, as to warrant a very complete reversal of the sentiments usually evoked by the mere mention of the objectionable word "Amateur."

The epithets of "gross incompetence," "shameless effrontery," and "impertinent assumption," always worked into the retributive reviews of the offending aspirants, have given way to the comparatively mild reproaches of "gracefully amateurish," and "unfortunate in conception."

This welcome revolution has been brought about in a variety of ways. The old race of transgressors have succumbed to the overwhelming avalanche of damnable press notices, and the new race, flourishing on their predecessors' defeat, have, by diligence and hard work, vanquished at last the dictum of public opinion, and offered themselves in their true light as earnest and intelligent students.

That true exponent of the Thespian art, illustrated by Dickens—the amateur who adopted the stage as a preliminary course to qualifying in the police dock for offences of the petty larceny description, and whose line of "genteel comedy" somewhat strongly

contrasted with his parent's rather more practical calling of "coal and potato" salesman—is now, alas, almost extinct, and the metropolis boasts comparatively few dramatic training schools of the class illustrated by the Dickens text.

The decline of the Israelitish costumier in the connection of amateur acting, is also a matter of congratulation; and the facilities with which all "properties" are now obtainable from recognised tradespeople, have doubtless been beneficial to the tyronic cause.

Amateurs, too, are far from being the harmless set of people, so often conjured up to our imagination by the dramatic press. By this statement, I don't want it to be understood that they are pugnacious, irascible beings, the scourge of the people they mix with; but a useful and valuable addition to the ranks of the benevolent and to the funds of deserving institutions. To support this assertion, perhaps nothing could more appropriately be adduced, than the following little "par." from the *Daily Telegraph*, of March 4th, 1887:

"It is easy enough to sneer at amateur actors; but it is sometimes forgotten how the harmless amusement of 'playing at acting' adds to the income of various deserving charities. The other day the Thespian Dramatic Club handed over to the Commercial Travellers' Schools a cheque for £62 15s. 9d., being the result of a very interesting and praiseworthy dramatic entertainment. The same society has contributed to different charitable institutions close upon £1,000."

This instance is only one of many, and, comparatively speaking, there are very few amateur representations which do not conceal the divine features of Charity behind the mask of Thespis.

This brief justification of amateur acting is necessitated by the fact that the said acting is occasionally anything but awe-inspiring, and that on very many occa-

sions it would be decidedly appropriate to placard the entertainment chamber with Chancellor Tisdall's lines

"For pity's sake we act and not for pay,

Then hear us for our cause, to night, we pray!"

Most amateurs, however, would not possess sufficiently powerful consciences to do that.

Again, it must be conceded that amateur actors possess rather audacious ideas in relation to their histrionic capacity. Personally speaking, I never yet knew an amateur who thought the delineation of Shakespeare's masterpieces above him in any way, or who doubted his power to grasp the most abstruse situations in a few days!

Conceit is the curse of the amateur, overthrowing his own judgment, ignoring that of his friends, and suggesting the grandest themes of dramatic authorship for mutilation and total effacement. "Amateurs step in where professionals fear to tread" might be quoted with considerable truth, for there is little doubt but that the majority of failures result more from temerity than from absolute incompetence. If a man wants to become a carpenter, or a bootmaker, or a stationer, he serves a long apprenticeship, and pays for that blessed privilege; but should he desire to "go on the stage," he consults a "Manual of Deportment," and a "Guide to Dramatic Fame"; postures in eccentric and original attitudes before the pier glass; frightens everyone in the dead of night by reciting a blood-and-thunder passage in a voice all too audible; consults his Shakespeare a little more frequently; goes to a theatre or two, and takes in the dramatic papers.

When he is sufficiently "stagey" to be able to confidently refer to Mr. Henry Irving as "Harry," and Mr. Augustus Harris as "Gus," in the glories of conversation with some cast-off super, or back-door bottle-washer, he entertains the certainly ordinary idea that he is now ripe for public appearance. Unfortunately, as a rule, managers are perverse, God-forsaken

creatures, with little faith in heaven-born genius of the self-conscious character. It is therefore somewhat difficult to "get on," and where all the aspirants finally get to, is a mystery unrevealed and unfathomable. Anyhow, one thing is certain—very few get on the stage.

I have peacefully slumbered through many amateur representations, so may fairly be assumed to know something about them. The casual observer will note that the wigs and dresses are either too small or too large; that the performers attempt to "exit" by blocked wings, and have to turn round and cross the stage while two actors are exchanging life-and-death secrets in bated breaths; that the hero invariably crimsons all over on first entrance, and forgets his cue later on; that one of the "solid" effects wobbles unceasingly during a whole scene; that some one is heard laughing loudly at the back in the midst of a telling situation; that the prompter, like the "voice without" in Shelly's *Hellas*, has far more to say than any one "on"; and that the curtain refuses either to go up more than a few feet, or descend more than half way.

All who attend amateur performances must have noticed most of these little irregularities, which are the distinguishing features of that class of entertainment, admirable in its way, but still somewhat eccentric.

In many cases, the performance of tragic and emotional pieces, presented by amateurs, would draw full houses as farcical comedies or burlesques. The spectacle of a lady drowning to slow music, and bathed in strong limelight, causing the departing spirit to wink in an excessively unspiritual manner, is generally productive of the greatest hilarity; and what can be more amusing than to watch two amateurs gingerly dodging each other all over the stage, armed with pistols handled in the most extraordinary way?

A prevalent idea amongst amateurs is to get up the

"effects" as well as they can, and to leave all minor business almost unrehearsed, so that one often beholds a man, after staggering on as if drunk and going through much general dialogue in a very slovenly manner, give to an emphatic passage a rendering evincing much thought and rehearsal.

Perhaps it is better to "electrify" the audience for a few minutes with a well-delivered speech, than to walk through the whole performance with genteel mediocrity; but why do not amateurs place their abilities under competent professional care before courting the censure of the public?

Very possibly the fear of the "Stage Swindlers," hereinafter treated of, deters not a few from seeking "professional" tuition. Still, there are many genuine tutors, and it is a great pity that their services are not more frequently sought. The Association of Elocutionists, recently founded to war against the impostors and dummy tutors, contains many men in its ranks, fully adequate to prune the unrestrained abilities of the amateur, and to convert them into controllable and portable emotions, completely subject to the will and in harmony with the individual vocal utterance.

As observed elsewhere, amateurs lose sight of the fact that they are surrounded practically by *claqueurs*, in the shape of their sisters and their cousins and their aunts; and they can seldom grasp the fact that what is received by an interested audience with acclamations, could possibly be greeted otherwise by a critical and independent body of playgoers.

However, it cannot be denied that amateurs are a useful and commendable sect of dramatic students, doing no harm to the professional—with the exception of the society element—but rather otherwise, by devoting their proceeds to the funds of some theatrical or general charity, and by being, as it were, a huge dramatic school, in which the players are the pupils and the theatres their text books.

THEATRES v. MUSIC HALLS.

IT is somewhat singular that very few *habitués* of the one class of establishment—either theatrical or music hall—are ever to be found in the auditorium of the other ; save those versatile and polyglot beings, the critics, who hover from the garden-parties of the Primrose League and the Masonic banquets at the Criterion, to the speciously concealed penny gaff description of theatrical entertainment and the magnificently mounted and correctly appointed Shakespearian representations produced under the auspices of Henry Irving or Wilson Barrett, to cull the sweetness from each dramatic flower and embody it in the “smart pars.” so dear to the heart of the theatrical and society reading public.

It has been very reasonably suggested that the privileges of smoking, or non-smoking, and the ingurgitation or non-ingurgitation of alcoholic stimulants has much to do with the question at issue.

For the theatre is a sealed book to the individual so formed by Nature (grafted on habit) as to be as incapable of existing without a pipe in his mouth as the average mackerel is when exposed to the unadulterated rays of the solar element. Those ladies and gentlemen too, accustomed for years to denote their approbation by violently banging a pewter vessel on the

metal slab of the music hall table, would be quite out of their element in the auditorium of the theatre where they would be required to denote the said approval by the æsthetic enunciation of the word "encore."

Indeed, it is on record that on the occasion of a visit of a music-hallite to the pit of a West-end theatre, he was so aggrieved by the constant repetition of the word "encore" by a gentleman leaning against the stall partition, that, reaching the said *superchic* a heavy blow with his stick, the *habitué* of the music-hall was heard to exclaim, in unison with the sound of the blow, "Stash yer honcore, let the gal sing it agin!"

It is questionable whether the average aristocratic dame would care for a song entitled "The Toffer of Camden Town," followed by a "screamingly comic sketch" entitled "How Mrs. Maloney got tight;" or whether a representative Leadenhall porter would derive much gratification from the rendering of a few native airs from the Italian Opera, so perhaps it is as well that there should be some strongly defined and unmistakable line of demarcation between the theatre and the sing-song shop.

It has been urged that the Music Hall would be greatly patronised by a better class of society were it not for the clouds of genuine cabbage-leaf and the presence of spirituous odours; there being many among the upper ten who delight in a genuinely comic song at the Beaufort or New Club, but who do not like to descend to such depths in search of their amusement.

But do we not have comic songs enough in our burlesques and comic operas? Personally, I contend that it is unnecessary to introduce the tables and pewter pots of the hall into the temples dedicated to histrionic art, for the gratification of a few staunch toppers and animated chimneys. The theatre offers every facility in the way of refreshing the inner man between the acts, when the cigar can also be indulged in either on

the door-steps, or in the *foyers* set apart as smoking *salons*.

What would be the feelings of the resuscitated William on beholding "with other eyes" people wildly evincing their approval of Hamlet's soliloquy by vigorously banging pewter-pots against the marble tops of the familiar tables; and where, indeed, would be the glory of scenic display, or the beauty of artistic acting, if partially obscured by clouds of dense and highly pungent smoke?

In the music-hall the presence of smoke does not much matter as there is seldom anything to see on the stage, and in many cases the banging of pots only render inaudible an idiotic ditty sung out of time and very much out of tune. Let those who doubt this, visit the "Mashers' Delight," the "Hall of Harmony" or the "Palace of Pleasure."

Again, the permission to smoke in the theatre would probably attract those metal-throated ladies and gentlemen who delight to share the chorus with the engaged vocalist. A few hundreds of those *dilettanti* singing "Queen of My Heart," would doubtless assist Mr. Hayden Coffin muchly, and in time the masses might be able to help along some of our most distinguished Italian Opera singers in the more difficult passages. It would also be a blessing to Mr. Sims Reeves, when he has one of his bad attacks, to be assisted by the gods and pittites with "Come into the garden, Maud," or "The Bay of Biscay."

Likewise, imagine Miss Ellen Terry, Miss Nelly Farren, or perhaps Mrs. James Brown Potter being indebted to such playgoers for an encore; or Mr. Charles Wyndham congratulated in the flowery language of the classic East.

Were a music-hall to forbid smoking and present a fairly elevating programme of comic songs and incidentals, there is no doubt that it would attract a high class of patrons; but it is hardly necessary to introduce

such privileges into the legitimate theatre which could scarcely result otherwise than in an influx of stable boys, billiard-markers and betting men.

That the two have much in common is self-evident, and at Christmas when "Two Lovely Black Eyes," and "Because she ain't Built that Way," descriptive of pastoral, are transplanted into the pantomimic programme, and the comic singer betakes himself to "The Lost Chord," and "The Better Land," the identity of the two classes of entertainment becomes somewhat doubtful.

There is no doubt but that the theatre is by far the most educational and rational place of amusement, as the music-hall programme often consists of ditties, tune-ful, no doubt, but often broad and too often senseless ; while the legitimate stage is always compelled, by force of public opinion and the mystic power of the Lord Chamberlain, to furnish a healthy performance of either section of the great and comprehensive British Drama.

ORDERS.

ALL the minnows and tritons who have written concerning the paper-plague, seem to have failed in suggesting a practicable hard-and-fast line of action by which free admissions to theatres, &c., should be regulated, generally observing somewhat as follows : "As is well known in theatrical circles, there are certain people who, to some extent, have a right to free admissions to the playhouse," and citing as examples of the privileged community the actor and dramatic author. There is much truth in the remark that when the play has vitality, many who now accept orders—free on application, per return post!—would pay to go if "paper" was not available save to those whose literary or histrionic ability—dramatic students?—justified its presentation. Such an extensive system of paper is, I take it, detrimental both to managers and the playgoers themselves. The managers, very probably, to partly compensate themselves for yielding to what they doubtless consider an irremediable evil, charge extra for programmes, &c. ; and such houses as the late "Imperial," on the strength of a "paper, nothing but paper" policy, still levy tolls on coats, hats, sticks and any and every description whatsoever of portable property, which is forcibly detained

during the performance (?) besides charging extraordinary prices for still more extraordinary refreshments. Such conduct naturally results in several indignant letters to the press, which, wisely in most instances, remarks that it "serves people right" for patronising such places. We may suppose, therefore, that, in the first instance, the houses thus condemned suffer by the exposure. In the second instance, we may conclude that "paper," industriously circulated by any management amongst any class of society, thereby renders such house cheap to the class amongst whom the paper is circulated; therefore, few pay to go, and the entertainment in the majority of cases is unworthy to be patronised. The "no fee" system cannot be too highly commended. The great evil in paper, however, lies in the fact that thousands of people, who have not the slightest pretence to right of admission, are annually admitted to the best houses.

Tradesmen who can well afford to pay, send their shop-boys round to the Box-office requesting an order for that or "s'mother evening!" Such applications may be put off; but if the boy be repeatedly sent the order is at last given and the enterprising tradesman enjoys himself at the expense of the management. Managers must certainly be assumed to know their own business best, and as Mr. Rupert Garry, in a letter to the *Dramatic Review*, contends, "it is better to fill the house somehow, as a half empty house will cause two things; the actors will be disheartened, because such an audience is always cold, and the audience will conclude, from the state of the theatre, that the play cannot be worth anything."

A neatly-worded letter, a crest, a stylish monogram, or a good address, suffice to obtain free admission to most of our houses, not to the pit, but to the best parts. This is a wide-spread evil, and, in my opinion, can only be checked by the adoption of one of the undermentioned systems:—

I. The compilation of a register, to be in every box-office, containing the names, etc., of every person whose standing in, or relation to, the theatrical world justifies free admittance with a companion. A registration and enquiry fee, of five shillings or so might be made, and the work could be advantageously supplied to theatrical managers; thus no, or very little, expense would be entailed by its production. The privileged people should be dramatic authors, journalistic critics and *bona-fide* members of the dramatic profession, to the total exclusion of all back-door bottle-washers, one-week supers and other hopeful but persevering applicants.

Or, II. By the distribution, by a representative theatrical society, of tickets to similar people, guaranteeing free admission to all playhouses whose managements belong to the society. N.B. I need hardly say that it is with my native modesty that I hazard these suggestions.

Of course the two systems above-mentioned would require certain modifications, but the main point of either is to have a *list of persons who are ENTITLED to free admissions*. Managers of theatres nowadays contrive by the judicious (?) distribution of paper to have their houses always full, and theatres are now being built which, if some comprehensive step be not soon taken, will doubtless adopt the old policy. It is distinctly impossible for so many to—not succeed, but exist. At the present time were four theatres closed, and the rest to adopt the “no fee” and general “non-paper” systems, and the public made aware that no paper would be issued, those houses would be even then but sparsely filled, such is the power of the paper fiend.

THE BOUQUET.

THE use and abuse of the bouquet as an offering of admiration and a tribute to the talents of an actress is a favourite theme of the dramatic cynic, but as all give only the one side of the question, a few words may not be out of place.

That an actress should cause an enormous bouquet to be made up and presented to her is one of the disagreeable aspects of stage life, and it is little short of disgusting to see large numbers passed from hand to hand to the stage.

But that a graceful and honest tribute in the shape of a rose or a button hole from Hopgood or Gérard, and thrown on the stage in a moment of enthusiasm, should be other than acceptable to the audience and eminently gratifying to the fortunate actress, is really impossible.

It is when the baskets, bouquets and wreaths are handed up in barrows and the stage is covered, that the scene is nauseating and snobbish.

There is much taste in the composition of a suitable bouquet. During the run of "Harvest" at the Princesses, in the autumn of 1886, a specially appropriate basket was made up of poppies, marguerites and carnations, with clusters of ripe nuts and golden grain to represent "Harvest," and this singularly artistic triumph was presented to that charming and able

artiste, Miss Amy Roselle. Again, the offering of primroses swathed in moss and maidenhair ferns, and draped with satin envelope and ribbons, is very appropriate on Primrose Day, when the modest yellow flower serves to recall such multifarious reminiscences.

On the occasion of a performance of "The Road to Ruin" a few years back, a magnificent basket was prepared of decayed bark covered with deliciously verdant moss and vegetable growth, literally on "The Road to Ruin," and from the elfin recesses of the picturesque bark peeped a few tiny, but beautiful, little toadstools. This presentation twined round with silk bands was most æsthetic and effective.

It is strange that with one or two exceptions, the recipients of these floral offerings are ladies. Wilson Barrett is a notable exception to this rule, his attendants having extra work entailed, (*vide* Fashion papers), by the duties of delivering the bouquets, filling the receptacles with water, disposing them therein, and, the next morning, taking them therefrom!

Then there is Mr. William Terriss, also a great favourite with lady play-goers, but why not Fred. Leslie who has forlornly taken to the artifice of throwing a dummy bouquet over his shoulder as he enters?

One of our most eminent actresses lately announced her intention of presenting her tributes to the various hospitals, an act of thoughtful charity which cannot be too highly commended, or too generally followed. The very sight of a beautiful flower is rare to thousands, and the eagerness with which they avail themselves of even a momentary glance is patent to all who will watch the windows of one of our large florists for a few minutes.

The animate nature of a flower is a silent sermon, and the lady just referred to has been deeply gratified by the announcements of the way in which the various patients have received her gifts.

May we not assume then, that the presentation of bouquets to actresses—*minus* concealed notes—is an innocent and pleasurable way of denoting the gratification derived from the performance of the recipient, and that, so long as they are not commissioned by the actress herself, they are to be encouraged as legitimate offerings by the playgoing public?

CRITICS AND DRAMATIC CRITICISM.

WERE a census taken of all the people who pretend to the title of dramatic critic, there would very possibly be some peculiar revelations. We should very likely find out that "Platypus" of the "Dramatic Scorchers," was a very queer bird, and that "Private Box" of the "Theatrical War-Cry," was a gentleman otherwise unknown to fame for very cogent reasons.

The Stage is such a magnetic quantity on this earth that it attracts a very queer crew to its surface, and there they stick.

A man to honestly claim the title of Dramatic Critic should possess an exceptional knowledge of theatrical literature and events. He should be a facile and amusing writer and should be gifted with the artistic eye and the educated ear, to detect the inconsistencies of mounting and the barbarisms of the instrumental score. He should be able to smoke a cigar, to recognise that which is "corked," to imbibe S. & B's innumerable, and to hold much alcoholic stimulant without betraying the fatal sin of inebriety.

But Heaven only knows from whence the majority of dramatic criticisms emanate.

Then the critics themselves are noticeable personages. There is the short thick-necked sentimentalist, the long-limbed humorist, the broad-shouldered prosaist, and the bow-legged finicist.

There is also the gentleman who will applaud, until he batters in the ferule of his umbrella (a fact!), for a consideration; there is the poet who always has a choice selection of adjectives, ready to form into a laudatory couplet in praise of anyone or anything on the shortest notice; there is the friend of the manager who can give the critics a tip or two, and there are the antagonistic people ready to pounce upon and cry down the slightest error in the construction or staging, and write those little paragraphs known to us as "racy" and "smart;" and to the legal counsel—for the prosecution—as "wilful and vindictive libels."

We all know the "Critical Artichoke" of the "Theatrical War-Cry," and revel in his caustic and ingeniously perverted dramatic truths. Ring up the act-drop and let us see the Artichoke at home. He is a smart canvassing agent for the "Body and Brains" Life Assurance Company; is about thirty-eight or forty; stoutish and irascible, and the constant companion of "the fancy" and of light and heavy sporting gentlemen, from the great turf swell to the humble but artful billiard-marker. He knows the real complexion, age and private relations of every "girl" in stock; and can trace the pedigree of any "star" as far back as that luminary can herself determine. Where there is no ancestral line to follow up, our critic has to invent the details much in the same way as the Heraldry Office discovered the family tree of the celebrated Mr. Bunter.

These facts are mostly available for conversational purposes and not as materials for essays, unless one young lady has erred so far as to net a peer of the realm; then, indeed, "the truth will out."

You see that long-haired, sharp-featured, young man striding along Fleet Street? That is D'Arcy Montague De Steyne, the shining light of the "Mirror of Momus." This is his style. "As the lascivious pleasing of the resonant orchestra smote voluptuously

upon the aural sense, the house, hushed with a wild yearning for the disclosure of the piece, scarcely breathed, until the warm, refulgent rays, turned on at the meter, flashed their ruddy glow upon the hardy British cheeks, and the rising of the act-drop revealed the goddesses of beauty in the subdued intensity of æsthetic raiment."

Then there is the assertive style of criticism which defies contradiction; the interrogative style which wants to know something, as follows: "We believe, but are not quite certain, that the authors term this eccentric mass of inconsistencies, a drama?"

The chance of theatrical criticism being consistent is extremely improbable, as the same piece will be exalted by one paper and decried by another with ease and facility. Indeed, the only "outside" paper that has consistently maintained its reputation for pronouncing a thoroughly sound and reliable verdict is the *Daily Telegraph*, and the judgment has almost invariably been that delivered by Mr. Clement Scott.

While there are press organs for almost every little section of theatrical society, and while such literary ventures continue to be supplied by directly interested people, it is but natural that we should get strangely opposing criticisms.

It is there, in the society and sectional journals, that theatrical criticism suffers; where the critic—unworthy of his self-assumed title—sinks the *censor* in the *friend*, and misconstrues, perverts and disguises in order that he may ground, upon baseless assumptions, the hateful fabric of malevolent criticism. A man can truly boast of his integrity when he declines all little offers from interested people, when he refuses to barter the gem of fair criticism for personal favours, and when he overthrows all attempts made to pervert his honest and matured opinion. It is quite natural that a man, having accepted the lavish hospitality of a manager, should feel unwilling to cry down any piece produced

by that management, even though it be absolutely contemptible, and it would be equally natural for a manager on reading a damnatory press-notice written by a man who had freely and heartily accepted his hospitality, to feel somewhat disgusted with his late guest, for his unsavoury action.

We have yet another critic. He is one of those noble souls who "pay,"—start not, reader, there are such—to view the performance and, being under no obligation to the management, feels a perfect right to criticise honestly, faithfully and heartily, and to subsequently go to roost, feeling that he has kept faith with the public and violated no law of hospitality.

There are hundreds of dramatic critics in this city of London, or who pretend to the title; yet it would puzzle any one to discover a score of unbiassed, capable men worthy to chronicle a dramatic event in the daily papers.

As for those contemptible and worthless quidnuncs, who write their criticisms before they see the play; who receive their hire from persons interested, and whose envenomed fangs bury themselves in the quivering reputational flesh of rival men; nothing could more legitimately describe them than to say that by reason even of their enormities they are utterly beneath comprehensive and critical damnation.

AMATEUR RECITERS.

IT is difficult to decide off-hand the exact place which amateur reciters hold. They are, occasionally, certainly not an unmixed blessing, and I have left some entertainments with the decided impression that they rather partake of the complexion of a curse. This, however, is a too generally sweeping denunciation to be applied to a body of persons who are always ready and willing to inflict themselves at concerts, etc., for the purposes of the benevolent.

Their first and almost general failing is the selection of too long pieces. A piece of prose or poetry for reciting should not occupy more than eight or ten minutes. Twelve minutes should be the most, except in the case of really humorous pieces. A person is never the cleverer for being able to recite any number of lines, if no appreciation of the subject is displayed. It was once my misfortune to hear two recitations, one about a bean-feast, the other, immediately following, describing a shipwreck, with no perceptible change of manner or delivery. It seems to be the sole idea of such reciters to suppose that all they need do is to become letter-perfect. There never was a greater mistake, except when Eve took what didn't belong to her. Another failing with purely amateur reciters is that the arts of expression and

gesture are too often ignored altogether, or relegated to a secondary position. It is possible that most of us have heard a lady explaining how

“The river rushes through the cornfields,”

meanwhile indicating the locality of the said cornfields by pointing earnestly to a design in the ceiling with her index finger; and equally possible that we have seen a gentleman, by the help of what he would call a gesture, expressing his belief that the cœrulean orbs are situated at some indefinite depth beneath the platform. Amateur reciters again, as a rule, either stand modestly like wax figures, or rush about defying fate to regulate their movements. Many, on their first public appearance, indulge in a hand-washing movement, or else clasp their hands and fix their eyes as earnestly as if the time-honoured photographer had directed them “to keep their heyes on one pertickler spot.” Remember, my dear reciter, that you are not a thing inanimate, but an individual conceded to be endowed with life. Others, again, wave their arms about in the most unmeaning manner. I have seen an individual work his arms about with the velocity, and almost the force, of a high-pressure steam-engine, and have heard the same gifted being enunciate the words in such a manner that the declamation resembled an inflammatory address through a defective telephone.

Repose—repose—repose should be the aim of all reciters, whether amateur or professional. Repose, but not Inanition. The mundane proportions of the reciter should also, to some extent, control the selection of his, or her, pieces which, moreover, should not be of a dreary, a horrible, or a melancholic character as *Virginius*, *Rizpah*, *The Progress of Madness*, *The Sacrilegious Gamesters*, etc. It is true that

“Where genius shines, minor distinctions fly,
Pritchard’s genteel, and Garrick six feet high.”

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but to see and hear a fat, stodgy individual recite Hamlet's Soliloquy is decidedly provocative of mirth ; and that an elderly lady, somewhere about sixty, arrayed in rouge, false teeth, front and an electro-pathic belt, should do Juliet's Balcony Scene is something too awful to dwell upon. Yet I have seen both these performances. N. B. The genius of amateur reciters being generally "not at home," on the elocutionary platform, Churchill's poetic dictum must be taken for what it is worth in this connection.

Also, beware of imitating the individuality and characteristic attitudes of others. A celebrated actor takes every opportunity of placing his hand on his hip. If he were going to drown he would, doubtless, "go down " with his hand gracefully resting on its favorite bone. A well-known actress acknowledges the presence of a table or sideboard on the stage by sidling up to it, taking possession of the edge with her fingers, and then facing round.

I would urge on amateur reciters—(1) To select short pieces ; (2) to let them be bright and cheerful, in preference to the contrary ; (3) to demonstrate to the assembled audience that they are human beings and not models ; also that they are capable of rational facial expression ; (4) to beware of unnatural and unmeaning gestures and attitudes ; (5) to show that they can manage their voice so as to render it capable of expressive modulation ; and (6) in emotional pieces, to have their passions portable, bottled-up and entirely under control. After the piece is concluded, bow and walk off. Do not grasp eagerly at any and every excuse for taking "a call ;" your own self-respect should guide you in this. If the audience continue to applaud so heartily as to justify an encore, let it be short, and of a bright and humorous character, and thereby give them no reason to curse the rashness which prompted the applause.

In conclusion, I would remark that amateurs do not

do justice to themselves, as a rule. They get up a piece hurriedly for a performance, but too often fail simply through having neglected to learn even the elements of elocution—expression, delivery and gesture—from some capable teacher. Naturally an intelligent body of dramatic exponents, they refuse to improve themselves by study, should they happen on the first occasion to be applauded—and they always have a few indiscreet friends among the audience. It is false reasoning to say, “I am applauded now, so why should I trouble?” Amateurs lose sight of the fact that their audiences are almost always extremely lenient; but they should never lose sight of the saying that “if a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well.” Be letter-perfect, and then carefully study the author’s meaning and idea; try to imagine yourself the character you are describing, and try to illustrate your words with appropriate gestures. Mr. Caraway Bones philosophically observes, “Every dog has its day, and every cat has its night.” I may supplement this by saying that the long-deferred day—or rather night—for reciters has now come, and that few charity and general entertainments are complete without the formerly much-despised reciter. Therefore, study, perfect yourselves, and go on and prosper. “M’Yes!”

THE CURTAIN RAISER.

MOST managements, in deference to the implied necessities of *habitués* of the stalls, P. B's. and dress-circle, seem to consider it necessary that some *bagatelle* should occupy the time during which the faithful pittites and gods are waiting, until the arrival of the *haut monde* shall sanction the rise of the curtain upon the legitimate entertainment.

The question is, of what shall this curtain-raiser consist? From time immemorial it has been the custom to present the almost inevitable "screaming farce," in which a policeman gets smothered with flour, or someone's clothes are stolen, or the maid of all work gets kidnapped, or some incoherent and impossible risologue which is doomed by pressure of time to be ill and hastily developed. But to many it seems that the farce system is less popular than it used to be and, therefore, decidedly on the wane, which, considering the vast intellectual strides made by the players, could hardly be otherwise.

During the reign of "A Run of Luck," at Drury Lane, 1886, Mr. Augustus Harris substituted a grand ballet in preference to the "screamer," with marked success.

Would it not be better, in order to while away the time in the most agreeable manner (allowing that the

wait for "the " piece, is imperative), to have either a high class concert, elocutionary selections, a drawing room sketch, or a vocal entertainment, such as those so ably and successfully given by Messrs. Corney Grain and George Grossmith? Many of those intelligent pittites who now groan, when the hero of the farce has his face covered with treacle and sawdust, would laugh heartily were they presented with a refined and humorous vocal sketch as delivered by a clever man; or would infinitely prefer, to the prevalent horse-play of the farce, a good instrumental or elocutionary selection. It being the duty and to the interests of the manager to please all his patrons, I would offer this suggestion for a trial on approval. I venture to think it would be acceptable to the average playgoer in proportion to its rationality and style of execution; and also, that it could not fail to be more successful than the inane absurdities with which most of our plays are now prefaced.

THE LYCEUM "FAUST."

GOETHE'S immortal tragedy has been adapted, staged and presented by innumerable people, but never, I venture to say, with such realistic entirety as is now evident at the Lyceum.

The chameleon-like facial changes of the eccentrically hellish Mephisto; the pantomimic Witches' Kitchen; the agony-piled scene in which the murdered Valentine denounces Margaret, and its sequel in the church; the weirdly suggestive scene on the summit of the Brocken; and the corps of angels descending to take a private view of the body in the dungeon are the chiefly noticeable incidents in a perfectly overwhelming catalogue of scenic and histrionic "effects."

Less talented artists would have been extinguished by the magnificent scenery and mechanism, but, in this instance, the staging is simply an appropriate frame for the presentation of the actors.

The version, as arranged by Mr. W. G. Wills, differs considerably from the original text, although most of the important passages are rendered full justice to with the exception that Margaret dies in the prison instead of expiating her innocence and purity on the gibbet.

Passing the first act, let us notice Act II, Scene I, Margaret's chamber, Nuremberg, where several incidents are prominently illustrated. It is pro-

foundly humorous to hear Mr. Irving, as Mephistophiles, quaintly pronounce "It isn't every girl that keeps her room so neat!" after an inspection of Margaret's room and bed linen, highly suggestive of a fidgetty old lady on the look out for F sharps. Again, notice Margaret's expression of surprise at the presence of the sulphurous odour left behind by her subterranean and uninvited guest; how delightful, too, is her bewilderment and ecstasy upon finding the jewels; how frank her utterances and how natural her trying on the necklace "just to see how it looks."

Then take Martha's house. Notice Martha's—Mrs. Chippendale,—varied feelings on hearing, from the gallant Mephisto, 1st of the decease of her spouse and, 2nd, of his desire that 200 masses should be said for his miserable soul; her courtship of the eligible demon and his anxiety lest he should be taken at his word and, lastly, that by-play at the door with the cock's feather.

Then the scene in Martha's garden. Long shall I remember how deliciously Miss Ellen Terry made love; long will the recollection of her sweetly frank and earnest utterances possess me; the delicate little trial, "He loves me not, *he loves me*," while the tender accents of the glorious passionate harmony of love yet restrain my memory from its usual eccentric vagaries. That Mr. Alexander worthily assisted in the amatory dialogue seems little to say, but it is grandly comprehensive and he looked the young lover to the life.

It is in this scene, too, that Mephistophiles gives those satirical utterances which so ably illustrate the soullessness of the part and which are absent in the three succeeding acts; viz., the unfortunate spirits' persistent persecution by the relentless matchmaking old Martha, provoking his very natural observation, "I wonder where she'll go to when she dies? I won't have her!" ; the frequent cynical utterance of the

word "Doctor!" to the metamorphosed Faust; and the comic walk-round with the engaging and eligible Martha.

The powerful action in Margaret's garden was especially impressive in the passages illustrating the discovery by Margaret of Mephisto's unsavoury personality, that gentleman's denunciation to Faust, and the delivery by Faust of the poison-phial to Margaret.

But the essence of the action, the concentrated magnificence of the Lyceum version is in the third act, when Margaret's mother lies dead and the Nuremberg gossips whisper scandals of the innocent girl who is all too unconscious of the threatening storm; when Valentine—Mr. Walter Forbes—returns and is maliciously informed of his sister's ill-fame; when he is slain by Faust at the instigation of Mephistophiles and when the trembling, sorrowing girl issues from her house only to be greeted by her dying brother with the horrible reproach, "Wanton!"

To adequately describe this scene as played by Miss Ellen Terry is impossible; to imagine it is preposterous. One must see the wailing, sobbing girl bowing her head before the cruel glances of the mob; must behold her borne down by the hateful cutting words of her murdered brother as he denounces her and advises "Be not ashamed, but as thou art a wanton, shrink not, but boldly ply thy trade!" and witness the culmination of her agony upon his solemn declaration, "Thy lover slew me!" echoed as it is by the people, who dart withering and hateful looks at the slight convulsed form, quivering on the ground with piteous sobs, loaded with shame and bursting with the unavailing consciousness of innocence.

It is a wonderful piece of acting and even beats the confessional scene where, when the betrayed Margaret has crept into the sacred edifice amidst the cruellest taunts from her neighbours;—between the responses,

the chanting of the choir and the resonant pealing of the organ—the tall form of Mephistophiles towers over the kneeling girl and tortures her with insidious and hellish words, while her lips essay to form in prayer and thus relieve the anguish-stricken soul. Finally, when the tempter issues from the porch and fiendishly watches his helpless victim shrink from the church, the curtain falls on one of the most effective situations I have ever beheld.

Somehow, I don't care much for the Walpurgis scene. I appreciate the witches flying about in their chaste and unobtrusive raiment ; I revel in the glare of the lightning and the discordant peals of thunder ; I recognise the value of the classically-garbed old gentleman whom I generally understand to express himself to the effect that he has been 300 years endeavouring to scale the Brocken ; I am delighted with the witches and young ladies who seem so much at home ; and the fascinating appearance of Mr. Irving's *profile* on the summit, I acknowledge to be a thing of beauty :—still it seems hardly realistic, although I have had no opportunity of judging by comparison.

The passage of Margaret in a cloud is indeed effective and the delicious jets of sulphur (or whatever it is) that so tastefully decorate every square foot at curtain-fall are quite charming, Yet Mr. Irving does well not to intensify it, as a lady next to me on one occasion seemed to be in a very precarious condition, both mentally and physically, during the latter part of the scene and occasioned me much uneasiness.

The last act in which the poor demented Margaret only recovers her reason to die in the dungeon is indeed pathetic, and the sad terror of the whole scene is only relieved by the particularly neat way in which Mephisto "vanishes" Faust, which is highly effective and "taking." I have devoted many hours usually allotted to the period of human repose in trying to discover by what means Mr. Alexander was made

scarce ; whether he went through the floor, out at the door or up at the flies, but, up to the present time, without success. N. B. I'm going to have another hour to-night ! I had just hit on the solution last evening, when a sound from my vivarium led me to pause and devote a few minutes to the pacification of the hedgehog and my pet snake who were "going for" each other with delightful assiduity. When I returned, after pouring water on the hedgehog and boxing-up the snake in his private sleeping apartment, the solution had departed. To-night, however, any of my dumb guests will have to adjust their little differences without any interference from their host. *Mais*, what on earth am I about ? *Revenons*, etc., etc. It would be mere assumption on my part to pretend to adjudicate any particular measure of assorted criticism to such dramatic exponents, who, from the master spirit to the humblest angel, witch, or more substantial personage, proved themselves fully adequate to the several requirements.

Also, the highest credit should be accorded to the machinist, Mr. Knight, for his really marvellous "ascents," and "descents," and, I suppose, also, the "incense," that issued from every crack and crevice of the sultry Brocken.

That Mr. W. G. Wills has done his work exceeding well, is evident ; that the exponents are the best, is manifest ; that the effects, appointments, choir, bells, organ, dresses and orchestra are O. K. is patent to all ; and that the whole performance is up to the Lyceum standard implies that to beat its record would be a large order, with difficulty to be given and well-nigh impossible to execute.

THE MODERN PANTOMIME.

DURING the last few years the pantomime has radically changed.

There is no longer an intelligible plot and there is seldom a rational title, unless, indeed, you can call "Harlequin Seven-leagued Jack, Sloper's Island, and the Peg Top of the Bay of Biscay," or something similar, akin to common sense.

But there ; who cares for common sense in a pantomime provided there be gorgeous ballets, shapely damsels, much horseplay and songs galore ? What do the audience care for the defeat of the indispensable fairy, if she only comes on and wobbles the wand now and again ; and what do they care about her acting, provided she sings "The Lost Chord," or "The Better Land," in the middle of the second act ?

Alas, what do they care about anything consistent, provided they have a comic donkey and a few young ladies attired in expansive shirt-fronts and wreathed in smiles and electric light ? The pantomime of to-day is merely a collection of popular items, slung together in a three hours' limit. Given the softly seductive strains of "Becos' she ain't built that way ;" and the somewhat secular ditty entitled "Two Lovely Black Eyes ;" a burlesque of "Queen of My Heart," and a parody on the "Hallelujah Chorus" ; a rendering

of the "Maid of the Mill," and a budget of current political references with unpatriotic allusions to the late and never-to-be-forgotten Jubilee; the pantomime concocter of to-day has a pretty easy time of it. Then the scenic gentleman knows exactly what will be wanted. He knows that the "Halls of Dazzling Delight," "The Forest Dell," "The Prince's Kitchen," and "A Passage in the Palace" will be absolutely necessary; and the rest can be easily strung together; with the exception of the transformation scene, "for the production of which the vast resources of this unrivalled house have been called into requisition, etc."

Then we are all aware that the evil spirit will sing "Three Acres and a Cow," and the first pantomime "boy" will indulge in playful badinage and sentimental duets with the first pantomime "girl." Then we know, equally well, that both these young ladies will indulge in ballads individually, after which they will exit in order to make room for the property donkey, who will, in turn, be succeeded by the grand procession.

We all know that the first act opens either in the moon, or else in those regions where the light is ruddy and the warmth more than genial; unless indeed we are introduced to the Marshes of Tadpoles or the Realms of Catland.

We are prepared for the three grand ballets and the inevitable topical song; and we accept with resignation, a dance by Morgiana on Ally Sloper's extinct volcano.

Our fun has evanesced and our annual entertainment has deteriorated into a mere spectacular representation which it is endeavoured to color by the introduction of music-hall celebrities and ladies of the *corps de ballet*.

Show me the pantomime at which the above are unrepresented and I cancel the statements. Show me

but one place where the artist genuinely endeavours to deserve applause by legitimate comic acting and not by ridiculous and absurd gyrations, and I will collapse. But as the poet somewhere chastely observes "You can't do it."

And in the harlequinade, where is that delicious, drawn out grotesqueness in the mimic combats between honey pot—clown—and cauliflower—pantaloon? The most excellent harlequinade I know of is performed by Bullock's Monopoly, (Marionettes) which I saw at Plymouth in November, 1876. These life size figures are now, I believe, in America, but on every occasion of their visits here, they have been welcomed as few flesh-and-blood humourists are. The "Bluebottle" of Arthur Roberts might vie with them in quaintness and antics, but then Roberts is alive—very much so—and has the puppets at distinct advantage. Even the last harlequinade at Old Drury was pronounced "slipshod bosh" by the press simply because the effects were trusted to machinery and accessories and not to humourists. The "Hot codlins" of old, created a furore; nowadays, the clown doesn't dream of singing, and feels somewhat ashamed of his fooling if any one even laughs at him!

Why don't our modern clowns take lessons from our comedians and learn their business? True, the house is often half empty at the end, but this wouldn't be the case if there was anything to see.

The clown shows no art, but only pockets the portables hurriedly and obtusely. He should employ facial expression to denote desire, resolution, action, acquirement, concealment, and, finally, injured innocence, when appealed to by the officer of the law.

But no such thing. The article is broadly and stupidly pouched—not cunningly pocketed—and then smacked across the face of the policeman, on the application of that functionary. Again, who has seen

a really artistic buttered-slide recently? The clown rushes in with the perambulator, falls down, upsets the concern and rushes off ; instead of coming on stolidly and ludicrously ; then shooting out the feet and sliding at a good incline the full length of the stage, to fall when going off. Let us hope that the gentry of England's harlequinade will show some more evidence, next year, of originality and intelligence in a humorous and adequate form of entertainment, instead of stultifying the unfortunate lingerer with a series of irrational and irritating passages.

THE AMATEUR JUBILEE CONCERT.

THE platform is, as it were, the twilight through which the aspirant passes, on his way from the darkness of his study to the gas-jets and lime-light of the legitimate stage.

I will instance this by a description of an amateur concert at Corkerton.

Corkerton is a country town a few miles out of London containing about 5,000 inhabitants, who were duly informed of the event one evening by the appearance of the local artist in bill-sticking—for bill-sticking is an art as I know to my cost, having spoilt a new hat and overcoat by pasting two 40 inch posters partly over the advertisement-wall and partly (the greater part) over my face and clothes ;—who duly proceeded to set forth on the hoardings that a local concert, in commemoration of the Jubilee, would be given by local artistes.

This was news. It was ! The good inhabitants of Corkerton read the placards till they were nearly blind and then went to bed to dream of the event. The squire ordered a new piano from Brinsmead as a Jubilee offering to the Corn Exchange—where the concert was to be held—and it was expected to arrive on the very day of the entertainment.

The eventful evening arrived and with it the

audience and two telegrams. One was to say that a wheel had come off Brinsmead's piano-carriage when about 10 miles from Corkerton, and the other set forth that the tenor had the toothache and preferred to spend the Jubilee by himself.

The local pork butcher—who acted as *impresario*—announced these messages to the audience and invited any gentleman among the assembly, with a good tenor voice, to supply the place of the afflicted one. One gentleman offered his services, and the concert began.

The first item was Schumann's "Arabesque." Miss Skink, a young lady of about 45, who had kindly consented to open the concert, then sat down to the antique, pre-historic, run-to-seed instrument ;—which had done duty for a piano at the Corn Exchange from time immemorial. As performed, the piece sounded somewhat like the "Black and Tan" Polka when played by a steam-roundabout organ. At the conclusion, Miss Skink's brother commenced to applaud loudly, but finding himself in the glorious minority of one, hesitated to continue and finally ceased. Some three more of the audience then commenced to clap their hands in a mild and inoffensive manner by way of encouragement. This also ceased.

Amid these dubious tokens of approval, Miss Skink bowed and resumed her seat at the side of the platform.

The next was an original trombone fantasia entitled "Awake, Victoria, Awake !" by a promising local gentleman, a Mr. Saunderson. The possibility of any one being otherwise than awake (and wide-awake) during this performance was extremely remote, and at the *finale*, Mr. Saunderson was loudly cheered, as such a patriotic composer deserved to be.

The Misses Turner then sang "What are we that dwell on earth?" as a duet with piano accompaniment. The latter instrument had unfortunately to mourn the loss of the middle C, owing to the force of Miss Skink's overture. During the duet, an old gentleman in the

auditorium was heard to exclaim that some of the "dwellers on earth" not far distant, were "bad singers if nothing else"; and later on, the piano gave two more notes up, as tributes to the power of the instrumentalist. It was originally only a 6 octave, and unfortunately had not lately been tuned, as the other piano had been confidently expected.

Later on, there was "The Death of Nelson," by the village hair-dresser, the bass; followed by "The Lost Chord"—there were three—on the piano.

That ended the First Part, and then there was an interval for the Squire to make a few remarks on "The Relation Subsisting between Corkerton and the Jubilee."

The Squire commenced by saying that "The Jubilee was a great occasion, and that most likely no one present would assist at another" (cheers.) "During the present reign, Corkerton had developed from a hamlet of four dwellings, two of which were beer-houses" (great cheering), "to a large and populous city—no, he meant town—of over 5,000 inhabitants" (Rapturous applause, during which the Squire asked his grandson to pass up his pocket-handkerchief which he had left on his seat, and on receiving it, wiped the elocutionary perspiration from his brow). "Corkerton now boasted a Corn-Exchange, a Post Office, two Churches and fourteen dissenting Chapels" (cheers). "It also had its own Salvation Army and Brass Band" (a voice "worse luck!") "Perhaps no better evidence could be adduced of its civilization than the fact that it had no less than seven hotels and thirty-eight beer-shops." (Tremendous applause.) "It was also within two miles of a railway station" (hear, hear). "It proudly boasted its own circle of notabilities, comprising vocalists and musicians of no mean degree; most of whom had kindly officiated that evening" (cheers.) "He was sure they were all grateful to those now on the platform whom he was proud to call his friends, and he was sure

that their sympathies would go out, with his, to the poor afflicted tenor, doubtless trying to soothe his aching tooth with patent medicines." (Here there were two distinct sobs apparently coming from the body of the hall and doubtless proceeding from some one who knew what toothache was like.) "He would not detain them long as the second part awaited them, but he would refer to the Sovereign whose Jubilee they were celebrating. The Queen was growing old" (cheers), "and had passed years among her people" (more cheers). "He moved that the inhabitants of Corkerton appoint a committee to compose a Jubilee Address and deliver it in person" (Great applause), "or, better still, invite Her Majesty to visit Corkerton in person." (Terrific cheering.) "He would trouble them no longer, he was proud of Corkerton which had a great future before it." (Loud and prolonged applause.)

The Squire then sat down and the performance recommenced with the part song "Arise and Sing." The choir then rose and essayed to sing, but, as the gentleman who volunteered as tenor was unfortunately ignorant of the words and had to be prompted by the mezzo-soprano, this item was hardly a success.

Then there was a recitation by the local chemist "Throw Physic to the Dogs"; followed by a selection from "Hamlet" by the same gentleman, who wished to show his marvellous versatility by contrasting the humorous with the melancholic. Hamlet's Soliloquy was somewhat marred by the elocutionist's habit of raising and dropping his head on his chest at the termination of every sentence (an attitude suggestive of profound reasoning on the part of the psychological powers); while the humorous selection was spoilt by a continual snigger, the artist holding that high spirits on the platform were infectious and that nothing makes an audience incline to merriment so much as a perpetual grin on the reciter's face during the humorous piece.

Miss Skink then sang to her own accompaniment a poem entitled "Flying thro' the Air"; to which she added as an encore, "Would I were a girl again!"

Mr. Saunderson then stepped in with an impromptu on his trombone "To Cupid, God of Love." I may be carping in my criticism, but I can scarcely fancy the trombone as a messenger of amorous thoughts or mental *billets-doux*.

The supplementary tenor then gave us "The Village Blacksmith," with original variations which paved the way to "God save the Queen" and the Street Door. To complete this account which is strictly accurate, names of places and performers alone being altered beyond possibility of recognition, we quote the account given in the next issue of the local paper, yclept "The Corkerton Observer," under the heading of "Corkerton and the Jubilee."

"Last Saturday, a concert consisting of the most select and classic *chefs d'œuvres* of the genii of the Muse and Song, was given by our talented local residents at the Corn Exchange which was crowded with enthusiastic Corkerites. The absence of Mr. Mort, the tenor, and the new piano which was to have been that evening presented by the Squire, augered ill for the proceedings, but the genius of Miss Skink came to the rescue with masterly tact and, by a finished rendering of the 'Arabesque,' secured success for the remainder of the evening.

"Our talented townsman, Mr. Saunderson, the eminent trombonist, played, with more than his usual skill, his two grand compositions, 'Awake, Victoria, Awake'—dedicated to the Queen—and 'To Cupid, God of Love.' We safely predict a glorious career for Mr. Saunderson. The choir was at its very best and never sang better than on this occasion. Mr. Jollop—the elocutionist—paralysed us with his tragic and impressive delivery of 'Hamlet's Soliloquy' and made all eyes run tears of joy, by his irresistibly

humorous rendering of 'Throw Physic to the Dogs.' The Misses Turner sang 'Oh what are we that Dwell on Earth' with tender feeling and charming pathetic simplicity, while Mr. Ted Boller gave the 'Village Blacksmith' in grand, sonorous tones.

"The Squire in alluding to the connection subsisting between our Native Soil and the Mistress of England dwelt learnedly and impressively on the possibility of the Queen herself visiting Corkerton and personally receiving the jubilations of its loyal inhabitants.

"Corkerton may well be proud of the impending visit, and there is little doubt but that its immense, though latent, resources becoming fully developed by the Royal Visit, it will enlarge its hospitable walls, and may be, at no very distant date, one of the largest cities in the kingdom, perhaps next in magnificence to London the Capital of the Empire!"

TOURING.

THE joys of touring are many—so are its sorrows. It is pleasant in the summer to visit town after town ; to ramble every week 'mid fields and pastures new, and to do the lions at each successive halting-place ; but it is quite another thing, in the bleak and wintry months, to travel to the place of performance an hour or two late, delayed by the weather, and have all your work cut out to get things ready and have a hasty meal before repairing to the dismal and comfortless dressing-rooms generally pertaining to country theatres.

Again, it varies muchly in the different companies whether the travelling be agreeable or the reverse.

When the tragedian waxes wroth with the low-comedian, and the walking-chambermaid has a bone to pick with the leading-lady, it is often desirable to be elsewhere, during the adjustment of these little differences.

Then, you are never certain whether your kind of entertainment will "catch on" with the local inhabitants, and you may possibly get into very uncomfortable quarters ; although, speaking generally, the profession are treated with as much respect as most members of the blood royal. The fact that paper is comparatively unknown in country theatres, almost

makes good the loss of receipts by low box-office charges and the half-price-after-9-o'clock system. In the country, too, a novelty is almost sure of an enthusiastic reception, which means a certain definite sum. Then the expenses connected with such representations are comparatively small. The local advertising is insignificant and the town-crier moderate. Cards drop in from local celebrities and calls from dramatic amateurs are occasional. An invitation to a dinner to be given by the Local Garrick or Green Room Club is soon found in the letter-box and accepted. Perhaps, however, you light upon an insignificant town full of absurdly ignorant creatures who never heard of Kean, and whose ideas are confined to the barn-storming exponents of Dramatic Art.

There are but few towns of this class now in existence, but some yet flourish in Wales, Yorkshire and Scotland, where the mere spectacle of an Italian *prima ballerina* would cause the good inhabitants to strengthen the roof in haste, lest it should decline to protect such an atrocity from the vengeance of the choicest and most select of thunderbolts.

When, however, clergymen's daughters dress in tights to pander to the clerical lovers of art, such good people might rest assured that the select thunderbolts aforesaid are not destined to descend on the humble lady of the ballet.

Touring is preferable to the old stock system for many reasons. The inhabitants of a town, whose theatre books companies on tour, often have the advantage of beholding London plays with the original performers, costumes and scenic appointments. On the other hand, an ordinarily efficient company essays, week after week, the greatest all-round dramatic contrasts, in which many of the parts are necessarily distributed according to the several physical qualifications, as whoever heard of a stout Jack Sheppard or a scraggy Falstaff?

Again, the mental labour is too much to permit excellent representations, week after week, of totally different works. To really act a part, the artist should feel and embody the impersonation ; and, in short, live the character personified in the flesh.

This requires much brain work and psychological study, which assuredly cannot be renewed every week, with adequate success. Many stock companies essay two dramas every night in each week. This demands and exacts the most assiduous application to the text-book and constant rehearsal.

It is, therefore, desirable on every account, that the London companies should work a merry-go-round with the provincial theatres and that their members should joyously and philosophically bear the various inconveniences and pleasurable incidents, with equal fortitude.

THE TRAGEDIAN.

THERE are several absolutely indispensable qualifications for a tragedian. He should be as joyous and comical in private life as the comedian is sullen and morose, and in person he should be stout with black hair and a red face. His voice should be resonant and barn-storming and he should proclaim his identity everywhere by means of his noisy conversation.

Why this idea is current in non-dramatic circles, it is almost useless to conjecture, but that it is so, anyone will be convinced who chooses for a few minutes to keep company with that class of playgoers who assume they know infinitely more than those actually on, or connected with, the stage.

On the same authority, you will hear full, true and particular accounts of nearly all their prominent features in private life, since their birth; and will also be informed who Mrs. Tragedian was before she married him, and why he married her. There is no class of actors who undergo more trying ordeals by people probing their business than tragedians, and what is found out is disseminated with such improvements and additions as the discoverer's fancy suggests.

The tragedian is as invariably a haughty man in novels as he is comic in the current gossip. His frown is a thing of beauty, his attitude suggestive of an

artist's model, and his gestures imperative and soul-subduing. His entry is simple and effective. He folds his arms, rushes in with three long strides, suddenly stops and glares ferociously at the audience. This is still more effective if he is capable of forcibly enunciating "More b'lud !" in a persuasive tone of voice, as if he had ordered a quantity to be in readiness and it was not yet unpacked. When a thorough use of all defensive and offensive weapons is of such importance to the tragedian, it is strange that he should neglect a little instruction in the art of manipulating the aforesaid weapons. I have seen a tragedian handle a blunderbuss in such a way that had it been loaded with "rale ball" it must inevitably have killed him, long before it was time to discharge it.

And, by the bye, why don't actors, using firearms, see to their going off ? I once saw a beautiful piece of sensationalism made ridiculous because the pistol only fired the percussion cap (one of the good old holster constructions), and the murdered man, who had fallen at the ignition of the cap, got up and gazed about, to ascertain whether he was shot or not ! After a few seconds visual investigation, he evidently came to the conclusion that he *was* shot, and therefore fell down again with a loud groan, which was considerably modified by the uproarious merriment of the house.

Also, as Mr. Conway Thornton says, has it ever occurred to you what a remarkably long time the tragedian takes to die ? His agony must be drawn-out to be effective. There is no nice easy death like that vouchsafed to the other characters, but he must grovel about for full three minutes before the curtain descends to bring relief. The villain, although blest with a most trying part, has only to choose between the derisive cheers of the audience and its hisses. Let me offer one suggestion : to introduce a hanging scene—with a real drop—in a new drama. It is really too much to see the old dagger or broad-sword exercise repeated so

often. Besides, the almost invariably comical sword play does not enhance the poetical nature of the awful death. There seems really to be very few types of stage-villains, although in real life their name is Legion. The three principal stage-types are the Shakesperian, the barn-stormer and the society villain. What a grand field there is for future playwrights to construct an entirely original villain which, placed in the hands of an accomplished tragedian, would be almost certain of success.

One of our best modern exponents of tragedy is Mr. Shiel Barry, who almost seems to create a distinctly original impersonation in every character he assumes.

There is a great fault, however, about this line of drama that lays it open to serious objection. It is that vice is often victorious and virtue perishes miserably to slow and pulse-quickenning music.

But who would dream of introducing Hawkshaw, the detective, to convey Mephistopheles to a dungeon cell?

We want more tragediennes, more Mrs. Bernard-Beeres, more Sarah Bernhardts and more Ellen Terrys to rank the tragedy still higher in the Annals of Art and the Journals of Journalism.

HOW SOME PLAYS ARE WRITTEN.

IN these speculative and inquisitive times when there is so general a desire to know the secrets of the most remote and ulterior occupations, it is not surprising that many are anxious to be informed how plays are written ; so that, following one dramatic construction, they can write something similar—only undeniably better.

It is obvious that, within the limits of a short paper, it is impossible to give a detailed guide to theatrical composition, so the indulgence of the reader must be requested for a mere outline of literally how some plays are written.

Unfortunately, *some* plays require a genius to produce them ; therefore any account of them will be out of place, as I take it for granted that my reader is modest and, although conscious of the possession of great innate abilities, does not, as yet, consider himself, or herself, a born genius.

There are, however, many ways of constructing plays without the architect possessing the slightest infusion of genius. There is the scissors-and-paste style. You overhaul all your old plays and adaptations and snip out all that takes your fancy. Then you piece the cuttings together, arrange them in five acts, interpolate some sentimental ballads from a not too popular

song-book, connect some straggling sentences into an apology for a plot, label it an entirely original five-act, ultrafashionable drama, and,—there you are.

It is readily perceived that this mode of composition is innocent of any very great claim upon genius or twaddle of that sort. If you advertise yourself ingeniously and give your name to a new cigarette or scent, it should go down well. Should any impertinent, prying, person detect a similarity anywhere, remind him that the greatest have been accused of plagiarism and that a "humble scribe" like yourself, cannot be expected to escape from the imputation. N.B. Always be modest.

If however your idea of originality refuses to "boil down" a play, let me suggest the sensational, which is a comparatively easy way of filling up the vocal requirements between the 15 or 16 changes of scenes necessary to a modern sensational—call it naturalistic or realistic—drama. Contrive to introduce a few good effects for the machinist, such as the Houses of Parliament emerging from the waves of the Atlantic after a terrific explosion; or the developing of a common-lodging house garret into the Niagara Falls. I need hardly add that such trifles as time and place must be unhesitatingly sacrificed to the effects; as no melodrama is really complete unless the characters have collectively visited every quarter of the globe. To further develop my meaning, I attach a paragraph from the *Dramatic Review* of Feb. 19th, 1887, which will show how one gentleman managed to overcome any little impediments suggested by the false modesty of objecting to improbabilities; and to illustrate that, with a proper allowance of sensational incidents, there should be, comparatively speaking, very little difficulty in writing a modern drama.

This is the paragraph:—

"The good people of Southampton have a grievance against Mr. Loftus Don. Mr. Don has caused more

headaches in the town in one night, than there have been in any previous week. We will explain. Mr. Don has written a five-act drama, *Hawk's Grip*, which was produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Southampton, last Monday. The play contains a horsewhipping, a false arrest, three attempted murders, one by shooting, one by stabbing and one by drowning, a seduction and desertion, an abduction, a case of drugging, a haunted house, a number of forged bank notes, a case of madness and a dynamite explosion. These are the chief items in the catalogue of more or less startling events contained in *Hawk's Grip*. We are inclined to think that the grievance of the people of Southampton is a legitimate one."

Personally I write my pieces in instalments, and when one is written put it carefully away in lavender and let it mature for a year or so. But this is very old fashioned and really ridiculous in these modern days when, over the walnuts and wine, the manager-and-lessee collaborates with the journalist; whose work consists of little, save sketching in the scenic effects and dramatic incidents; leaving the actors to more or less arrange the clap-trap. Good wholesome ranting and the spouting of lengths of virtuous declamation (to fit in with the changes of scene) are the principal elements of ordinary melodramatic composition; and, as such, are easily forthcoming.

Perhaps, however, the composition of burlesque is aspired to. This is unfortunate, as it requires some kind of libretto. Still, if you can supply a host of pretty girls and pretty dresses to partially clothe them with, I think the affair can be made successful without the necessity of stupendous intellectual exertion. Of course, there must be plenty of dancing, some comic singing, any amount of gagging, imitations of celebrities of the day, and picturesque occasional *ensembles*. If any catching music is obtainable or can be written to order, so much the better; if however,

nothing original can be produced, exhume some half-forgotten popular melodies and write words to them. It is desirable, for many obvious reasons, that the author should contrive somehow to have a good healthy nightmare before composing the plot, or arranging it somewhat in accordance with that of the work burlesqued ; as it is very necessary that the most glaring inconsistencies in detail, dress and scenery should be presented.

The above hints for burlesque are also available for the construction of comic opera, in which however, anything of a humorous tendency— to suit the modern theatrical palate—should be sternly eliminated.

Farcical comedy demands slightly different treatment. Here, some old farce should be disarticulated and grafted to another farce—also old. The two should then be worked into three acts ; the complications further complicated by a few original introductions ; the agony piled on and the business intensified until the last act, which—also, to suit modern requirements—should slow down from fever heat to a few degrees below zero and should finally allow the act drop to fall on an almost empty house.

I would give a few hints for Shakesperian composition, but owing to the fact that there is always a representation of one or more of such works on the boards, any imitation of his style would probably be unprofitable, as the British public irrationally attach so much importance to the emanations of his pen. Besides, it requires genius which, as before explained, is a disallowed article owing to its comparative scarcity.

Anyhow, the above hints may be sufficient to show how plays have been, still are and can be manufactured ; and I trust that, when the future tritons of the drama attain their exalted position, they will not fail to acknowledge the invaluable help they have derived from the perusal of these notes !

P.S. The above may be found difficult to “ plant ! ”

PART II.

STAGE SWINDLERS.

THE numerical strength of Stage Swindlers is, at the present time, so great that it seems to call for some emphatic and complete exposure of their "goings on," although the intense idiocy and profound gullibility of the victims are open to strong comment.

Speaking generally, the people who desire premiums for appearances, and who (as "after-claps") "drop in for," say, a couple of guineas for each press notice obtained through their instrumentality (and which are seldom worth the paper they are printed on, the journals (?) being sheets with no circulation), are humbugs pure and simple.

The plausible gentleman who desires a managing secretary for his provincial tour (often composed of beardless aspirants (male) and elderly females, who not only pay premiums for their own appearances, but who are also generously allowed to defray their travelling expenses whilst on tour) and who, for the consideration of a premium, accepts any one for the post, be he (or she) aged nine or ninety, is also one of the questionable gentry.

Ladies who are requested to play Lady Macbeth after a nine days' term of tuition—truly a nine days' wonder—and gentlemen who are inducted into the mysteries of *Hamlet* for two guineas, and are "put

on" in the character within six days from their introduction to the professor (who, by-the-bye, is generally unable to secure a salaried engagement for himself, unless it be as general messenger or bottle-washer-in-ordinary to some third-class establishment), might reasonably be expected to be able to "smell a rat;" but such is the plausibility of the spider, and such the guileless innocence of the fly, that the animal in question is, comparatively speaking, seldom smelt. This metaphor is a bit mixed, but so long as my readers understand what I am driving at, such trifles, shall be, as they have ever been with me, beneath consideration. I am personally acquainted with a young fellow, aged seventeen, who was offered the acting managership of a provincial touring company for the trifling sum of £150, the salary being £4 per week. The amiable proprietor was also willing to include (for the £150) a deed of partnership, entitling him to one-third of the profits. My young friend, upon receipt of this enticing offer, favoured me with a sight of the document, and then wrote as follows at my dictation:—

"Would you kindly inform me if the 'one-third profits' upon investment of £150 for acting-managership of your touring Company, would mean one-third of profits at doors (viz., Box office receipts only), or would they also include one-third of moneys paid by members of the company for privilege of acting through provincial tour? Also the average amount of profits to be reasonably expected, and whether such would be obtainable weekly, quarterly, or otherwise?"

I need hardly say that my *protégé* did not join in with the "well-known London manager and his big London success." Had he done so, he would most probably have found that the "ghost walked" at extremely irregular periods, that he would have had the inexpressible felicity of paying his own—and perhaps someone else's—travelling expenses, and he

might also have had the honour of lending certain sums to his noble employer. The premiums paid by the company, he would probably find, had vanished at the time they were paid, and the box office receipts (prices of admission generally ranging in country theatres (?) from three shillings to threepence, and after nine o'clock half-price), after deducting rent, the two-thirds of his employer's, the necessary inseparable minor expenses, etc., and finally arriving at his own share, would be found—if they could be found at all, the proprietor generally officiating as money taker—extremely insignificant. His cup of bitterness would then have been filled by the extreme indifference and coolness of his employer, the mortification of knowing that he had been completely “taken in” and, ten to one, the speedy collapse of the tour, which would necessitate dispensing with his services. The “tour” would then remain stationary for a week, and another acting-manager would be appointed for a consideration as before, while the fleecing game would then be renewed. Should the gentleman undertaking the duties prove unfit for them, his superior would doubtless be able to find someone, who (for a trifling £2 a week) would assist the “dear boy”! Should several possessing the necessary qualification (cheque for £150) apply for the post, all would be accepted by the enterprising manager, who would play them on and off with the tour!

In the case of people who prepare for the stage, and whose only qualifications are cheek and unbounded mendacity, the *modus operandi* is somewhat different. They seldom send their terms or particulars, but request a personal interview, trusting to their natural qualifications to pull them through. The aspirants (who must of necessity be “green” to listen to the voice of the charmer ensconced in the dramatic agency) fall easy victims to the accomplished professors. The *répertoire* of the various instructors is extremely varied,

the capabilities of some of the gentlemen being of such extraordinary comprehensiveness as to include every theatrical business, from Shakspearian to the banjo and clog dance. Those who wish to bask in the smiles of 'Arry and 'Arriet of the Music-Hallian *monde*, are instructed in the beauties of "English as she is spoke" at the inferior music-halls and palaces, where culture in *en evidence* in the shape of sanded floor and spittoons. A man of such versatility as to be capable of the art of instruction in both the enigmas of the Bard of Avon and the subtleties of the "cellar-flap" break-down, is one of the many individuals, who, while unable to get engagements themselves, consider themselves capable of inducting aspirants into it. These gentry are very accommodating, as, if they do not immediately receive replies, they conclude that—when they have previously stated terms—their charges are too high and very considerably write, offering to moderate them to the capabilities of your exchequer.

Several of the agencies announce *répertoires* of over a dozen plays on their prospectus, but which consists, very probably, of "only one," which, with an "outrageously screaming" farce, forms the total entertainment proposed. Others advertise "Great London Success to be produced. "Starring tour in the Provinces," etc., all the while being absorbed in cogitations as to how long the landlord will stand this sort of thing; "this sort of thing" being generally represented by unpaid back rent extending from an indefinite period, probably lost in the mazes of obscurity.

Let it not be thought that man alone glories in the title of Stage Swindler, as there are many "Madames" and "Signoras" who obtain for pupils (when competent!) "introductions to leading managers." The last lady I came across of this description was £40 in arrears for rent, and did not even own the piano and properties with which the students were instructed!

There are a few reliable *introduceurs*, and one or two

agencies that really do prepare for the stage, but their name is few, while that of the fleecing shops is legion. It is a pity that the *bonâ-fide* tutors do not form an association to prosecute the nameless swindlers and brazen scoundrels who shame not to rob the destitute of their very clothes when their money is exhausted, and whose heartlessness and incompetence is only equalled by their private depravity. I have personally taken the trouble to investigate several cases, and can safely say that it is hard to find a redeeming feature in those who do not belong to the recognised establishments. The epithets, all too unworthy to heap upon the names of such individuals, would bring blushes to the cheeks of innocence ; therefore I refrain from even indicating them—with the co-operation of the printer and his intelligent compositor—by typographical dashes. The particulars of cases are also too revolting to insert elsewhere than in the most degraded W.P.B., but I will say that any one, taking but little trouble, can discover any number of them. I, for one, would not mind setting any stage-struck readers on the right road, on their stating the initial or wedge-point of their ambition “which hath no limits ;” but the S. S. beings would do much better, in my opinion, to confine their love of the stage to observations from the auditorium portion of the house.

AMATEUR AUTHORS AND COMPOSERS.

HAPPY and blessed beings are the composers and authors of the amateur circles.

They are not bound by any rules of precedent, but work their own sweet wills, fanned by the approbation of their surroundings.

They are not instructed to suit the play to the scenery and properties "in hand"; nor are they worried with visits from the company who endeavour to get their respective parts "written up" to their individual conceptions.

They have no management to dictate to them what is to be done and what is to be left undone; no one to command them to interpolate sentimental songs in a certain scene; and no one to harass and restrict them in all their flights of fancy and gushing efforts at originality.

The amateur has no leading lady to call upon him to beg and demand by turns, that she must wear a certain dress which suits her complexion and "style";—no matter how foreign it is to the period or subject-matter of the play.

Happy souls are amateurs in the possession of these blessings.

But they also have their drawbacks. They generally have to pay for their representations, or contribute most liberally towards the expenses,—and then feel

only too proud to do so. They must restrict their *dramatis personæ* to the number of ladies and gentlemen available and they must debar themselves from such scenic effects as "the passage of the fleet by moonlight," "the Roman arena," or "Whiteley's on fire!"

Stage-armies and stupendous accessories are forbidden to the amateur;—which is a very good thing in most cases, as the performance generally bottles itself up in a single evening and only boasts, as the result of incubation, a score of damnatory press-notices.

The amateur delights or has to confine his characters to "interiors" and "exteriors," where the difference between the "baronial hall" and the "Soho garret," the "country road" and the "abbey garden" is comparatively unnoticeable.

A great drawback to the production of mounted pieces by amateurs is the comparative untrustworthiness of the scene-shifter. At one place, our shifting staff consisted of a man and an almost microscopically small boy. On the afternoon of the eventful day, I had given the man half a crown, upon receiving a solemn promise of having all in readiness for the evening and many asseverations that all should "go off" without a hitch. Imagine my rapture (?) when, on arriving a few minutes before the time announced to commence, I found that the man hadn't arrived, and the scenes were piled up in confusion! Later on, the wretched being turned up, but so full of alcoholic stimulants that I had to lay him out behind the scenes and tell him not to groan aloud more than he could help—as it would disturb the action of the piece—whilst the company and the diminutive boy did their best with the properties.

In my salad days, I once constructed a piece—and wonderfully and fearfully constructed it was, too,—where the full view of the vasty deep was not only desirable but imperative.

I had hired a hall where "scenic properties" were laid on, so to speak, for all requirements; so, not doubting but that there was some sort of "water" in stock, the scene was duly entered on the programmes as "The Giant's Causeway—10 A.M." What was my horror to find that there was nothing in the way of scenery which could possibly be utilised in the production of this magnificent effect! It was absolutely necessary, too, that there should be the rolling ocean somewhere, as one of the characters had to be deposited therein, to agony-piled music specially written by my talented collaborator.

But no; there was nothing that would do duty. We tried the sky, but there was only one set of clouds in stock and that had been painted in brilliant streaks to represent a glorious sunset! Clearly, if they had to do duty, there would be half the sky up aloft, and the sea streaked with pickled cabbage, resting on the boards with a country-hedge behind it, for the rocks! That certainly wouldn't flatter the Giant's Causeway! At last some 1000 bills were struck off on the evening of the performance, and handed round during the interval;—before the disclosure of the Causeway in its primitive grandness.

The humiliating document ran as follows:—"Mr. Neville Lynn begs to announce that, at the last moment, he has discovered the absence of sad sea waves (or anything like them) from the scenic resources of this establishment. The kindest indulgence of the audience is therefore respectfully requested on behalf of "The Giant's Causeway" which will be indicated—on this occasion only—by a village inn and well; an event probably unparalleled in the annals of dramatic representation."

The audience, fortunately, were good tempered and allowed the heroine to be vanished down the well with as much applause as if she had been hurled off the causeway, as originally intended; only, of a different kind.

But, to resume : It is only fair to allow that what amateurs gain by not being professional, they lose by being amateur ; with one exception, and that a very notable one. They have no band of unrelenting and unrelaxable critics to deal with, and they have no need to follow the play with the knowledge that, on the result of the evening, depends their future.

The amateur gives away mostly "paper" and he must indeed be a hardened sinner who could hiss the friends of the acquaintances who have given him the order ; or else, the performance must be eminently worthy of negative approval.

Then there is the composer. There are very few amateur composers, the pieces being generally independent of all claims to musical accompaniment, save that of the piano, which is occasionally brought into requisition for a stray ballad, or amatory duet.

This, generally speaking, is a blessing for which only those who are extensively acquainted with amateur music are sufficiently thankful. It is not that it can't be heard, for it can ; there generally being three bass notes in proportion to one treble. Such compositions are invariably imitations of successful pieces ; but, from fear of charges of plagiarism, burlesqued so as to be almost unrecognisable. Then again, the compositions have a strong leaning towards the comic song element, which being easiest to write is the most essayed ; something with a dot-and-carry-one metre being conspicuously the favorite. That and the sentimental with a few lame and halting connecting passages, generally completes the musical score of an amateur production.

The following are the more noticeable features of an amateur two-act piece. Act I. (1) chorus, rather inspiring and a good imitation of something lately in vogue at a principal theatre ; (2) heroine with ballad, wailing for hero ; (3) hero with song wanting to know the whereabouts of heroine ; (4) meeting of the happy pair ; duet, "Never to part " or something of that

sort ; (5) entrance of villain, also wanting to know whereabouts of hero ; slow and thrilling ; (6) hero and heroine enter, awful scene, villainy victorious,—always is, first act, you know,—and curtain.

Act II. (1) Mournful maiden indulging in pensive thoughts of her young man ; (2) villain, with song, gloating over miseries of aforesaid maiden ; (3) aforesaid maiden giving villain piece of her mind in tremolo ; (4) villain retires, vowing more vengeance, deep and impassioned ; (5) return of hero, rejoicing, and with a new duet ; and (6) consignment of the villain to the deepest dungeon, vigorous, discordant, and altogether suggestive of curtain !

THE SHAKESPEARIAN RÉCHAUFFÉ.

IT is well known that all great men, with few exceptions, are the posthumous victims of the pleasurable purgatory that steams, warms up, hashes and generally reproduces selections from their works; which collectively are labelled as "anniversary" or "celebration" performances.

It is doubtful whether Wm. Shakespeare would feel greatly flattered if he could witness the frauds of entertainments that are perpetrated in his name by unscrupulous adventurers, who obtain gentlemen to guarantee the necessary funds (and allow such amiable lunatics to officiate as stewards) while they themselves reap a rich reward by pocketing the box-office receipts and leaving the guarantors to fill up the necessary cheques.

Such events, however, are mere trifles when contrasted with the numerous versions brought forward by responsible people and properly mounted and acted; and, indeed, it is certain that "the divine William" would extend full forgiveness to all who thief in his name, could he behold the ample justice he receives at the hands of such exponents as Miss Mary Anderson in the dual role of Hermione and Perdita, Miss Ellen Terry as Ophelia, Henry Irving as Shylock and Wilson Barrett as Hamlet.

How is it that the British Public will tolerate *réchauffés*, when they can have the unadulterated version served up complete with all the accessories that taste, art and lavish expenditure can secure, and with acting that the gods on Olympus would delight to look upon?

What intellectual enjoyment is there in hearing a lady "doing" Shakespeare with the proud consciousness that ranting alone is indispensable; or a gentleman whose ideas coincide with those of the somewhat original "ghost" who "took a call" in acknowledgement of some applause from the gallery?

The intricate psychological studies which serve as Shakespeare's loftiest creations, demand intuitive capacity of the highest mental order to adequately conceive and execute. Recognising that, it is surprising to contemplate the idiocy of the vast number of "intelligent amateurs" who daily pose as delineators of Shakespeare. When a genius of the barn-storming order illustrates his idea of what the impersonation should be, the result is generally sufficiently amusing to defend it from serious or detailed criticism; but when an educated person essays the same part, it will be found that his very learning prevents his constructing a farcical comedy out of "Macbeth" or "The Merchant of Venice," whilst his limited experience precludes anything very sublime or overpoweringly intelligent. The consequence is that the unhappy delinquent staggers through a series of acts with the proud knowledge that he is about the only person in the house who cares anything about the performance; while his "kind friends in front" feel a sort of undefined idea that a few more weeks of study would not be absolutely thrown away, and, also that the histrionic art would not very greatly suffer by the retirement of one or more of its exponents there present. The scenery may be adequate, the properties may be of the best, but, in the production of Shake-

speare, no scenic effects, no interpolated incidents, can compensate for bad acting. Therefore, the public should politely but firmly decline to patronise any representation that is not strongly and efficiently supported.

Unless the acting be of the best, for the sake of art, call the performance a farcical version and add a few intellectual little bits of business ; such as in the Balcony Scene of " Romeo and Juliet " ; contrive that a flower-pot with loose mould, shall descend on Romeo's head in the middle of an impassioned utterance, and introduce a botanical sentence or two on the Primrose League, and some meteorological observations on our English weather. To supplement this sort of thing, there might be a topical song, and a ballet with Juliet as *première danseuse*. I know I shall be thought brutal for saying so, but I should infinitely prefer a comic Shakespeare to a performance badly acted. With Capulet as the heavy father (with a little appropriate dialogue) and a few mechanical burlesque changes in the vault scene, a stock company might possibly endeavour to essay a performance.

But there will be no need for this sacrilege if only adequate support is given to every serious attempt made by managers to elevate the drama and act rationally. Miss Mary Anderson is unrivalled for queenly dignity, coquettish prettiness and dainty treatment ; Miss Ellen Terry is unequalled in pathetic grief and subtle declamation ; Mr. Irving is pre-eminent in forcible earnestness and effectiveness in delivery ; and Mr. Wilson Barrett is possessed of the eloquent utterance of a poet and the physique of a god. Shakespeare could have no finer delineators than the above four typically modern students ; who are ably supported by Miss Eastlakes and Mr. Alexanders innumerable.

Although we are assured by our oldest playgoers that modern actors are inferior to those of their day, the

statement is easily controvertible by the fact that it is in adolescence that events make the greatest impression and cling to the memory more tenaciously, and thus, the early performers would earn an indelible remembrance to the depreciation of later exponents ; which granting, we may most confidently assume that modern dramatic art is in no way inferior to that practised by Kean, Phelps, Siddons and Macready.

Therefore let us permit no more *réchauffés*, no more weak, knock-kneed Shakespearian impostures ; but boldly and unflinchingly support only those managers who employ the best exponents, and who mount their pieces to match the talents of their artists.

EVENING DRESS.

I

NOWADAYS, when so many of the fair sex take any and every opportunity to harass us poor, long-suffering males upon the irrationality and eccentricity of our evening attire, it behoves some one of the injured sex to, metaphorically, "get up and speak." Searching the records, I find that men, throughout all ages, have been censured for their costume. The ladies, I admit, have also been censured ; but it is the culmination of the past few years that, while the ladies' evening habiliments are "ravishing," "sweetly pretty," and "unspeakably and indescribably beautiful," the garments of the gentlemen remain "odious," "hideous," and "utterly execrable." In the name of Art—with a big A—what are we to wear ? Are we to be—for our ladye's sake—transformed into walking models of Sir Piercie Shafton, or are we to affect the costume prevalent some 200 years back, and to attire ourselves in boots and knickerbockers trimmed with lace, to ornament our faces with stars and half-moons, and to wear long locks of hair hanging from the temples adorned with parti-colored ribbons, yclept love-locks ? Or are we to appear in full-flowing Ramillies' periwigs, three-cornered hats, long frock-coats, knee-breeches, silk stockings and buckled shoes, looking, with the addition of dress swords and flowered waistcoats, like disorganised rainbows ?

Or shall we don trunks, or attire ourselves *à la* Mephistophiles or Jonathan Wild, or æsthetically? Or in a combination of the last three, but with lace at the bosom and wrists? Or, *à la* negro entertainer, with shirt-frill and G. O. M. collar? (And, by-the-bye, it is only this year that I met a gentleman with a shirt frill in the Gaiety stalls!) Or, shall we attire ourselves as the youthful Gerard of Charles Reade's "Cloister and the Hearth," for the benefit of our fanciful "Princess Claudias?" Or—but, ladies, kindly do—oh, do!—appoint a spokesmaiden to give us an outline of a costume in which we can appear, exciting admiration and not derision. We have now no Van Klopen or Desmartins. We had the archæological Godwin, I admit; but he was *archæological* and not a *modern* man milliner. The Rational Dress enthusiasts do not assist us with anything beautiful, and we have not time ourselves—occupied with business which, alas! woman is not—to invent anything pretty. And, after all, our modern evening dress is comfortable and easy to don. It is, moreover, a test. A gentleman always looks a gentleman in evening dress; but tallow-chandlers, soap-boilers, or retired pork-butchers remain T. C.'s., S. B.'s. and R. P. B.s., notwithstanding; or rather, appear more like butlers or waiters. It is quiet, unassuming and, in the highest sense of the word, gentlemanly.

N. P. Willis contrasts us very favorably with other nations in this respect. While foreigners are heavy, gaudy and conspicuous, we are at ease, natural and superior. "It's English, you know." I do not recommend evening dress to reciters. Far from it! I had the misfortune one evening last month to witness gentlemen doing selections from *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* in the orthodox swallow-tail. They were amateurs. They *were*! I do not often go to hear amateurs recite; but on this occasion it was on the spur of the moment and, consequently, without reflection as to

what I might possibly be "let in for." When either gentleman assumed a supplicating posture, or, at the *finale*, when they got red in the face and excessively hoarse in their efforts to appear cool and collected, they presented a most ludicrous appearance, with their coat-tails nervously wagging between their legs or waving violently in the air. I notice, too, that many will persist in appearing at afternoon performances, especially lectures, in evening dress. A gentleman did lately at Drury Lane, and looked most out of place.

As I have said what not to wear and omitted saying what ought to be worn, I will say that a morning suit is correct, and that even a frock-coat is permissible. Ladies should not attack our evening dress ; on the contrary, they should favour it, as it shows them—the ladies—in relief, and tones down their abnormal and oftentimes extraordinary brilliancy of colouring.

II.

I HAVE a humane, almost philanthropic, motive in adding these few lines. They are thusly indited mainly with the idea of warning persons not physically robust and mentally equable, who may have a view of making suggestions *re* evening dress, not to do so. Since my last article I have been considerably enlightened in many ways, and will endeavour to place the concentrated genius of my correspondents before you in a more compact form than that affected by them. One gentleman writing with a decisiveness that augurs further communicatory favours, strengthens his adverse argument with the late lamented H. S. Leigh's well known lines :

“ I hate the habits which denote
The slave to fashion’s rule ;
I hate the black, unwieldly coat
Which makes one look a fool.
I execrate the Gibus hat
(Collapsing with a spring),
The shiny boots, the white cravat,
And nearly everything
That’s worn by dandies, who profess
To be *au fait* in evening dress.”

My correspondent then abruptly descends to prose, and suggests in lieu of the “black unwieldly coat,” &c., a “velvet box coat and white waistcoat,” which, he wildly impresses upon me, would be just the thing for rational evening dress. In conclusion, I am warned by the irate individual in the following somewhat forcible language : “ Sir, if you promulgate any more of your abominable ideas on the subject of evening dress, I’ll knock you into a cocked hat, which is next door to a ‘Gibus,’ and then I can conveniently and poetically ‘execrate,’ you.” As Mr. Caraway Bones would observe, “M’Yes !” The original of this fearful communication I have preserved in my Black Museum.

A lady correspondent, writing in somewhat confident language, reminds me that in my article I did not suggest the Roman toga and sandals as substitutes for evening dress, and refers me to the splendid appearance of one Wilson Barrett, in the above classical garb. I forbore to suggest the toga, &c., from motives which are obvious. Fancy a stockbroker, or corpulent city merchant, in a toga in our—essentially our—climate; or a gouty person in sandals, which would have to be supplanted by india-rubber shoes. Fancy too, Clito in india-rubber shoes ! Lord Byron always admired the Grecian costume—kirtle and flowing juktanilla, &c.—and N. P. Willis laments the custom of the more

influential Greeks in attiring themselves in modern European garb. The Greek costume moreover, is excessively expensive, being loaded with braid.

An unhappy "pote," one Mr. F. B. Doveton, protesteth as follows :

" I am not one of Fashion's slaves,
I candidly confess,
But am a modest bard, who craves
A more romantic dress.
I was not born a waiter, yet
In evening togs arrayed,
I'm asked by thirsty snobs to get
Their snobship's lemonade."

Other correspondents suggest a modified frock-coat. Now, I consider a frock-coat to be one of the most abominable creations in cloth ; unlovely in aspect, and decidedly not over-comfortable. One well-meaning individual wants a sort of permanent cape garment, as if the cape was not sufficiently well represented in opera cloaks and overcoats already. Truly, may I say, man will never be content with the cut of his coat, till he is either clothed as the angels, or arrayed in the fashionable garments of the lower world !

THE ANNUAL INVASION OF THE MUSIC HALL.

AT the Happy Christmas Tide, when the tap of Music Hall Notoriety is turned full on to our legitimate stage for the purposes of pantomime, it may, perhaps, not be too much to enquire into the effect of this upon the dramatic exponents who are unable to play Macbeth or Carmen one evening and Clown or Columbine the next.

It is very certain that, while the popular entertainers are disporting themselves on the boards of the theatre, our Miss Terrys and Mrs. Kendals do not amuse the crowd by singing "All on account of Eliza," or "He was such a Nice Young Man !"

Neither do we have it on record that Henry Irving sings "I'm a Chappie," or that Wilson Barrett obliges with a cellar-flap break-down on the boards of the Music Hall, while Herbert Campbell and the Blondin Donkey disport themselves within the precincts of the theatre.

Moreover, the banished professors of the "legitimate" cannot go touring for the simple reason that any town with a reasonable population settles itself down at Christmas for a good dose of modern, unrestricted pantomime, such as "Harlequin King Waterpot, or the Cave of Cannibals and the India-rubber Duck."

Rest assured, gentle reader, that the unemployed do not die, modestly and unpretendingly, from utter want

and starvation, in lowly dwellings and sky parlour attics. Speaking seriously, this annual infectious Music Hall pox does but very little harm to the profession. There are only about half of the London theatres that inoculate themselves with the pantomimic virus, and such generally retain their old company and augment it from the music hall staff, while Henry Irving revels on the Brocken and the annual burlesque is produced at the Gaiety. Then again, there is no pantomime at the Adelphi, the Savoy, the Haymarket, the Princess's, the St. James's, the Olympic, the Strand, the Globe, the Vaudeville, the Royalty, the Criterion, the Prince of Wales and the Comedy, as a rule ; in addition to the above-named establishments. What care the patrons of "In the Ranks," "The Harbour Lights," "Iolanthe," "The Mikado," "Ruddigore," "Wild Oats," "David Garrick," "Clito," "Claudian," "Jim, the Penman," "The Schoolmistress," "The Churchwarden," "Sophia," "Jack-in-the-Box," "The Private Secretary," "Dorothy" and "Turned Up," for Pantomime?

Then what harm does the music hall element do? Indeed, it does good rather than harm, for, after the pantomime, how joyfully we turn from the fooleries of the clown to the soliloquies of "Hamlet," the tragedy of "Faust" and the refined humorisms of the only J. L. Toole.

Where does the White-Eyed Caffir stand in our estimation when contrasted in the mind's eye with Claudian ; although the latter has not even a plebeian whistle to defend himself from the host of eccentric sounds procurable from the musical properties of the peculiar and fantastic Chirgwin?

The annual fashion does far more harm in the country, where the music hall songstresses assume the parts of the "principal boys" and the music hall songsters insert themselves into the jerkins and petticoats of the mediæval barons and mothers-in-law.

But is it imperative that the music hall element be introduced in our annual Xmas representation? Cannot we possibly do without the fairy singing "Loving" or "The Maid of the Mill"; or the villain declaiming "The Model from Madam Tussaud's"; or is it absolutely necessary that all the principal ditties for the past season shall be crowded together in a two-hours' term at Xmas?

Although, as we have said, comparatively few dramatic exponents are thrown out of employment during the pantomime season; it must be remembered that those few number two or three hundred, whose voice should not be forgotten in the rage for dance, song and scenery; and it is to be hoped that the time will soon arrive when it is no longer necessary to condemn a body of genuine actors and actresses to enforced idleness during the period when the stars of the Music Hall are revelling and dominant on the legitimate boards.

THE SACRED LAMP.

TO raise a laugh and provoke a smile was the literary parody produced ; and for the same purpose may we assume that the breath of existence was breathed into the sacred lamp of burlesque.

Although some parodies seem almost sacrilegious, we can hardly apply this reproach to burlesque, which only ridicules and perverts the masterpieces of man.

We often need a hearty laugh to relieve us from the cares of social and domestic life, and this want is often obtainable, not by going to the sensational or romantic play, but by a visit to the merry, bright and tuneful burlesque where we behold gay troupes of easily-draped mythological goddesses, or bands of shapely-formed cavaliers.

Let us not be so ruthless as to tear aside the tinsel and banish the limelight, but let us enjoy the semblance of happiness. No situation in life is without its tragedy, no house without its skeleton. Remind me not of weird and woful legends of the various performers, but let us enjoy ourselves and thank Messrs. Hollingshead and Edwardes for the perfection to which they have been mainly instrumental in bringing the sacred lamp.

Who does not remember Edward Terry as the mainspring of burlesque some few years ago ? And

how many modern playgoers do not entertain pleasing thoughts of the Gaiety, Nellie Farren and Fred Leslie? Life has but few enjoyments and surely the mere gratification of the eye and ear is better than the brutish indulgence of debauchery? And with what mental pleasure do we revel in the distortions of the original version; in the clever apropos songs and in the sparkling tuneful music; not the wild cadence, or glorious burst of harmony, but the catching, merry tunes and harmless jingle of burlesque. Surely this is better than the bar or the billiard-room. We bathe in wit, and are satiated with dance and song, the remembrance of which will cheer us in our lonely moments and reconcile us to our altered estate. We either live in the past, wade in the present, or speculate on the future; and when we require stimulation, we seek it, not in soporific influences, not in the ingurgitation of alcoholic stimulants, but in the tonic of healthy music, joyous voices, nimble limbs and pretty features, lifting us to mental felicity and ensuring us the ability to turn on this particular tap of felicitous remembrance at any future occasion.

The Burlesque is an admirable tonic at times; it affords food for contemplation and healthy philosophy, and is a source of mental enjoyment, since the writer of a good burlesque must be a clever man.

The vivacity and versatility of the performance is enjoyable; there is no sickening sentimentality, no mad fatuosity like that which drags the gambler to his doom, but it is a fecund form of entertainment which leaves a sparkling remembrance for the future and is a visual enjoyment often to be recalled. Around the entertainment hover the Cherubs of Beauty, Dance and Song to lend their attractions to the already glittering flame of joyous music and mental wealth comprised within the limits of the Sacred Lamp.

WHY AMATEURS CAN'T MAKE STAGE-LOVE.

THE importance of this subject is such, that it merits an earnest and exhaustive enquiry from those doomed to frequently attend amateur productions.

When the blushing swain essays to pass his arm round the dainty waist of the coy, yet willing, maiden, it is noticed by the observant, that his face pales with fear and that his arm seeks to enfold the trim and shapely form with much the same abhorrent caution that an average maiden lady assumes when she essays to remove a slug from a cabbage leaf,—this simile is copy-right. On the other hand, Chloe betrays an uneasy and expressive facial contortion and inhales the atmospheric particles in jerky breaths, until the arm of Daphnis is removed and the momentary purgatory has been spirited away by the applause of the audience.

Why, then, is this? It is owing to the senseless and irrational prejudice which the parental guardians of both sexes instil into their hopeful progeny. This feeling can hardly be better illustrated than by quoting the reply made by one of the young wooers who, when questioned by me, exclaimed—"My dear fellow, I assure you that all the time I had my arm round that girl's waist, I *felt* the gaze of her mother indignantly rivetted on me; and *if you only knew that woman*, you would not wonder at the effect her basilisk glare had on me!"

In this particular instance, the cautious mother had insisted on several interviews, and had duly initiated the unhappy man into the precise paths of etiquette ; as modified by her, for the amateur stage. That a man and woman should look or speak as if they really entertained an affection for each other or as if they wished the audience to suppose that they did, in order to assist the interest and development of the plot, was, in this fond mother's opinion, simply preposterous.

The amatory passages were to be spoken calmly, and the attitudes assumed conventionally, as though to imply to the audience ; " Of course, we really do not feel this sort of thing but, as it is down in the book, we have to speak it, don't you know !"

Consequently, most amateur lovemakings on the stage are tame or ridiculous ; as either the lovers will converse apart and in an ordinary manner, or will approach with squirmy, uncertain motions, until they are in the confidential position demanded by the author's MS.

Sometimes, however, it is the maiden who is the principal objector. " As if I was going to hug that great idiot !" a young lady once said to me when I was meekly endeavouring to persuade her that it was the right and proper thing to do, and that she must sacrifice her personal feelings, not only to her artistic ambition but to the credit of histrionic art.

With the professional, the case is different, as no actor hesitates to really clasp his partner, neither does any actress object to being so embraced ; some, indeed, I have been told, rather like it. This by the way ! Emphasis in motion and impassioned accents give a warmth of colour to the dramatic picture, in which, if represented by amateurs, the bare outline of emotion would alone be suggested.

Who, again, ever saw an amateur rush from the wings and clasp his fair one to his manly breast ? No one, I venture to say. The Romeo either rushes on

and falls over some properties (which he stoops to pick up), or else he goes on gingerly, fully conscious that Capulet is watching his antics through a pair of formidable opera-glasses, and that all Juliet's relations are critically sitting, in joyful anticipation of his making a complete hash of it, and seldom are they disappointed.

Juliet, also, has too many conflicting emotions to help the unhappy Romeo in any way. She is wondering what "mamma" is staring at her for, and devoutly wishes that she were in the auditorium to slap her little brother for making frightful faces at her at this trying moment. But there is little time for meditation. Romeo is approaching and she must play her part, though "ma" look ever so strangely, and a baby at the back refuse to stop an impromptu solo on its own account.

Let us draw the curtain over this harrowing scene and listen to their final congratulations before retiring to rest.

"Ellen, my dear, I am surprised that you should encourage Mr. Robinson so on the stage! I know he is a very respectable young man, but still, it is irritating to see one's own daughter disporting herself in so forward a manner on the public stage. What must the audience have thought of it?"

"George, old man, you really did behave in an extraordinary way to-night! You rushed at that girl and capsized the village stile instead of getting over it, and when you did catch hold of her you nearly fell down, owing to the clumsy way in which you did it. But really, old fellow, it did not much matter as no one heard what either of you were saying; did they, now?"

Such are the soothing compliments paid to those audacious enough to essay the thankless parts of hero and heroine.

THE SOCIETY ELEMENT.

FROM the time when ladies first donned the vestments of the stage, there have been society people desirous of playing at acting on a real stage and with real actors, just as children delight in making believe to be maternal parents when allowed to hold a real live squalling infant for a few moments.

This ambition would be pardonable were it done inoffensively and without injuring the profession, but it is not. Were Society authors to produce their insipid productions at their own expense, and then distribute them among their friends and acquaintances, the vanity would be harmless and rather amusing than otherwise. When, however, they rely on their style and title for a large circulation, and bargain with publishers, the result is that professional authors are greatly and irreparably injured ; for, as the publisher will say, " I can get Lord Vane Aspirant to pay me for producing his work, when you, not content with the honor, require pecunia."

And so it is with the Society aspirant who either pays, or is paid, for her services according to her social standing and backers. If she has Royalty at her back she is well paid ; but if she has only a moderate amount of influence, she gives her services gratis for a short time. Sometimes the society favourite is of the masculine gender, but generally it is a lady who

invites our censure ; therefore more harm is done to the professional actress than to the actor.

The lady of a *cause célèbre* equally commands notoriety and a high salary, while a comparatively or wholly virtuous professional actress is shunted to make room for the pet of Society.

Immediately any fashionable scandal raises—or lowers—a lady to the level of notoriety, she is inundated with offers from managers and dramatic *entrepreneurs*, to become either a vocalist or a rose-water actress.

Generally, the misguided recipient of these tempting offers swallows the bait—it is hardly genteel to talk of a lady swallowing a bait, but, “no matter”—and comes out strong, in the critical view, as a fully-fledged specimen of gross incompetence. The stage needs no fashionable beauties or calumniated virgins to elevate it. The true actor knows the dramatic art to be a hard and relentless taskmaster ; the fashionable one recognises it merely as a vehicle for attaining notoriety and the attendant pecunia. The stage is dragged down by such people to the level of a show-booth, and Art is sacrificed to the worship of Form. Far be it for me to say that all Society aspirants are notorious people who had better drown themselves off-hand ; because many are sincere and earnest in their desire to lead a theatrical life. Such people, however, are led away by their friends to announce their entrance by a metaphorical flourish of trumpets, by the publication of innumerable personal details in the Society organs, and by the exposure of their photographs in all the shop windows for billiard-markers and bank-clerks to stare at and, perhaps, purchase. The difference between fame and notoriety is this : fame is lasting, notoriety is not. Immediately the damnatory press notices have done their work and the photographs have vanished from the shop-windows, the fragile being is forgotten and unregretted.

But, if the *débutante* commences her dramatic career, humbly and unostentatiously, and is proved to be possessed of true histrionic talent, then comes professional and lasting fame, and not the evanescent notoriety of Society.

Some people have been specially gifted by the Creator with histrionic talent, simply to the end that such talent should be fully exercised, and it is such people that we want. We want no grimacers, no ranters, no gaggers, no languishing sentimental loungers, but actors and actresses capable of expression, intonation, gesture and modulation ; in short, those who not only can act, but those who understand and know how to act. It is the duty of the press and public to encourage true art in all its branches and to reject all spurious imitations and pretensions, with no consideration as to how influential or pecuniarily-favoured such false art may be.

THE MATINÉE.

READER, forgive me the irresistible impulse that tempts me to add yet another to the already long list of lucubrations labelled "The Matinée."

Apparently, the same vaulting ambition that induces the amateur author to invariably essay a ghost story, a yarn, and a school tale, has actuated all professional dramatic critics to secure their claim to the title by a series of articles on such subjects as "Amateurs," "Orders," "Touring," "The Matinée," etc.

With my native modesty, therefore, I commence by positively and definitely defining the "matinée," as a morning performance of a nondescript character.

As we know, there are all sorts and conditions of matinées, from the meanest benefit performance to the last appearance of a favorite actor, prior to commencing the now imperative American tour.

The entertainment may consist of an act or two of one or more dramas, a farce, a topical duet, two or three recitations, and a few music-hall items for the purposes of padding; or it may be solely devoted to the production of a new piece, soon to be relegated to the W. P. B.

Or it may be the occasion on which a monied aspirant elects to brave the wrath of the critics by an amateur exposition of "Hamlet" or a lengthy term of Shakespearian readings.

One universally granted idea is that the old *matinée* custom so proudly revived by John Douglas, E. T. Smith (*vide* the familiar John Coleman), and the great John Hollingshead, is an abominable nuisance and fraught with pitfalls to the unwary critic, as he too often enters the theatre without the slightest suspicion of what he may be let in for.

Is it really necessary that every person with the remotest claim to the privilege of a benefit, should impose upon the playgoing public, to the extent of a special *matinée*? There are some twenty London companies, and in every company there are six or eight deserving people who are inexorable in their demands for a benefit, which they almost always contrive to take place in the afternoon, when they can get all their friends to assist and can show themselves off in truly fearful and wonderful contrasts of character-impersonations. These are the kind of announcements with which one is daily petrified: "Miss Trynte Nolan presents her compliments to Mr. Neville Lynn and requests the pleasure of his attendance at her Benefit on Wednesday next, at 3 o'clock, when she will essay the characters of Juliet ('Romeo and Juliet'), and Mrs. Gamp, in a dramatised version of 'Martin Chuzzlewit';" or, "Mr. Cupar St. Andrews begs to announce that, on Monday next, he will take his Annual Benefit, on which occasion only, he will impersonate David Garrick, Grimaldi and Jonathan Wild." Fancy Kean giving us a dose of "Faust," "The Private Secretary," "The Forty Thieves," and "The Secrets of the Police" at one sitting! This is the sort of *Matinée* mixture the modern critic has to put up with. Course I. "Cox and Box," Mrs. Brown-Potter, James Fernandez and the Blondin Donkey. Course II. Act from the "School for Scandal," the two Macs, George Grossmith and "Queen of My Heart." Course III. Charles Coborn, song "Two Lovely Black Eyes," with additional verses in Gaelic,

Maori, Hindustani, and stage Irish ; Nellie Farren, Henry Irving and a scene from "Claudian" ; and, Course IV. : G. H. Macdermott, J. L. Toole, Wilson Barrett as "Chatterton," and Fred Leslie and company in a scene from "Rip Van Winkle," concluding with the "Botany Bay" song from "Little Jack Sheppard."

And after that, the captious calumniator has to go home, play at honey-pots with his olive-branches, and turn up an hour afterwards, to be at the first night of "Found Out, or the Mattapanna Mystery," a five-act thriller from the French.

Then, sometimes you go to St. George's Hall to hear the new elocutionist give a series of "High Class Dramatic Representations," and have the blessed privilege of hearing a gentleman, in evening dress, maunder two hours away in declaiming at imaginary personages in different voices, with the text-book in his hand, a tumbler and decanter of water on an octagonal table at his right, and several voice-lozenges in his waistcoat-pocket, one of which is surreptitiously sucked at every interval, when the young lady at the piano obliges with a little something from Liszt or Chopin.

Seldom, however, does the playgoer care for the *matinée*. Rather would he be sighing 'mid the pines at Bournemouth, singing with the feathered vocalists at Shanklin, or throbbing with the waves at Mount's Bay. Oh ! ye ambitious amateurs, ye aspiring stage-managers, and ye soaring heavy-fathers and walking chambermaids, do not, oh ! do not bring us up from Brighton or over from Cannes to your *matinées*, simply because they are dramatic events which the Cuttles of Criticism must "make notes on." Remember, ye soubrettes and low-comedians, ye gasping Garricks and Gower Street Grimaldis, that the *matinée* once chronicled is forgotten and seldom, if ever, unearthed. Kindly therefore be sparing with your "benefits" and "contrasts" and do not tempt us quite so often with those astounding mixtures that, like the Imperial Institute, "must be seen to be believed."

SCENICALLY OVERWHELMED.

OF late years, it has become noticeable that the lavish expenditure on scenery and appointments has produced effects so gorgeous and spectacles so magnificent, as to dazzle the eye and render it careless and oblivious to the acting. While the ocular optic remains fascinated by the splendour and brilliancy of the scene, the acting is being wasted on the perfume-laden air.

Dumas *père* has said that the best scenery and the finest dresses in no way help the portrayal of human passions and sentiments, and this assertion, as far as it goes, is strictly correct. Yet it is necessary, to assist the illusion, that we should have the proper dresses and correct archæological surroundings to reconcile us to the difference in the period and fashions.

Dumas alone provides for the emotions of the breast, which cannot be assisted by external surroundings; but the cultured and refined of this century have provided suitable properties, which are the more effective as they are the more artistic.

No one who has beheld Wilson Barrett's Earthquake, or Corder's Avalanche, can doubt that the nearest approaches to Nature are the most effective resources of art; but in many of the gorgeous and extravagant scenes, bathed in lime and electric

lights, the chief effect is nullified by the fact that the acting is not appreciated, owing to the splendour of the scene. At a recent pantomime, one actor said to his companion in "The Realms of Bliss," "D——it, Bob, have a shot with *your* part ; *I* can't get a word in edgeways owing to that blessed electric light !"

Here, it is true, not much acting was lost, but a nightly sense of gnawing out-of-placeness took possession of these two unfortunate exponents who were relegated to a secondary position by the rays of the electric light.

In many modern plays, the scenic effects are made the primary attraction, while all others are relegated to a very inferior position.

Let the scenery and mechanical effects be "spiffin" at an East End theatre, and good acting is unnecessary and uncalled-for. The veriest tyro can play a part, if he be surrounded with marvels of mechanical stage management, which effectually attract attention from his amateurish goings-on.

The spectacle of "The Storm at Sea" with real water, will distract all eyes from the wretched beings in the property boat, who are wildly endeavouring to draw attention to the fact that they are on the stage. But why "argey ?" We know quite well that, if we want tuneful eccentricity, we must go to the Savoy ; if we want national dramas, we must go to Drury Lane ; if we wish to see a rattling burlesque, we must go to the Gaiety, and that if we desire to worship high art, acting and scenery, we must go to the Lyceum ; for comic opera, we go to the Comedy ; and for farcical comedies we hie to the Globe or the Royalty. For society acting, we patronise the Haymarket and the St. James's ; and for the melodrama, dear to the pittite, we frequent the Adelphi. For harmony, we patronise the Prince of Wales, and other theatres have their distinguishing features which are changed to suit the

fickle taste of the British playgoer. In fact, before this appears, it is quite possible that we may have farce at the Lyceum, tragedy at the Gaiety and old comedies at the Adelphi. Therefore, I refrain. Let us collectively sympathise with those unfortunate beings who are scenically overwhelmed, and individually consult our own inclinations and the *Daily Telegraph* columns, to decide which form of entertainment shall be temporarily patronised.

THE PROVINCIAL TEST.

THAT the several lettings of the principal London houses are so many monopolies, is a true boon and blessing to the critic, who of late years was fetched from his cosy fireside, or from his easy chair at the club, to witness a performance of some dramatic monstrosity enough to turn the brain of any one who took the plot in a serious light ; or else, one of those vapid, insipid pieces hardly worth the trouble of expressing negative approval by the truly British Hiss, and utterly beneath anything but the most contemptuous, withering and reprehensive criticism.

Now, thank goodness, most of these productions see the light in the provinces, where they are promptly extinguished by the local press and then, tired of running the gauntlet of unfavourable criticism, vanish, as effectually as the money spent on their production has vanished before them.

The London managers require to know something about the merits of a play before they let their house for its production, and, therefore, many pieces, formerly produced in town, are now relegated to a trial trip in the provinces. Indeed, so fashionable has this become, that many of the best managers prefer to take their newest acquirements on tour ; instead of chancing a " West End frost," at the birth of the piece.

Every week, we read in the *Era* and the *Stage* a list of the host of new pieces produced, mostly by novices, at the provincial houses. But how many survive? Here is the code of Darwin's law strenuously exacted. We have the survival of the fittest. The others, like domestic pins and elocutionary pupils, vanish. There is no middle course. The piece which is unable to succeed is lost for ever, as a rule, and the question of reduced salaries can seldom be entertained. If it won't draw, it is quite immaterial whether it has to be paid for or is obtainable "for the honor and glory." There are some monied playwrights who are persuaded, by their attendant maggots, to continue their representations for some time at their own cost; but such people generally find the performance rather an expensive way of ministering to their vanity.

If, however, the play "takes on" it is generally trotted round for a short tour, to gain local notices and provincial notoriety. Then the London season may be ventured on, and an opportunity is taken to lease a Strand theatre during the regular management's vacation.

Those ancient fossils who remember the days when all new plays were produced in London, and when there were few provincial theatres;—most towns contenting themselves with the dear old barn for the play-acting "rogues and vagabonds"—must be truly thankful now to note that the majority of the twaddle receives its deathblow in the provinces; unless, indeed, it is a society actress, to whom a *debut* elsewhere than in the metropolis would be social degradation.

And we are compelled to admit that, much as it has been the fashion to sneer at the provincial press, the days are now rapidly nearing when it will be very difficult to find any adequate grounds for flouting their opinions.

The fact is, that very many clever men come to London for a livelihood. They find that the literary

market is already overstocked, so they hie to the country and there make their reputation. Very many of our foremost men in the literary and dramatic profession have gained their first standing in the provinces, and, armed with local credentials, have advanced to similar eminence in town.

Nowadays, when every town has one or more theatres or, at least, a corn exchange and concert hall; it is instructive to follow the successes of a dramatic company. All who have experienced the delights of touring, will affirm that each town has its own peculiar notions, and some have them very strongly marked.

For instance, a play received with enthusiasm in one town, will fall quite flat in another ; or a situation rousing one audience to fever-heat, will scarcely succeed in interesting another body of playgoers ; while all touring companies will tell you that their receptions have varied greatly in different towns.

This system is a most valuable test, as, generally speaking, the version most in harmony with provincial approbation is most suitable for London production.

AMATEURS v. PROFESSIONALS.

FROM the earliest ages, a strong antagonism has existed between the amateur and the professional, and in Holy Writ we have it recorded that a certain amateur was strongly disgusted with the musical performance of an eminent professional.

The pro. looks upon the amateur as a conceited and contaminating paddler in the private waters of histrionic art ; and the amateur considers the pro. an egotistical and stuck-up individual, whose estimate of his own importance is greatly exaggerated.

To embody these ideas in original language, I quote what a pro. described as being amateurs ;—viz., “ the most God-forsaken lot under the sun ”—and what an amateur said to me about professionals—viz., “ that they were an almost unbroken congregation of eminent egotists.”

As it is largely an audience of amateurs that attends the benefit performances of unfortunate professionals, we may not be far wrong in concluding that amateurs hardly merit the reproach of the legitimate actor, whose performances are so often patronised by the class of aspirants they so roundly stigmatise.

Many a fallen idol has had good reason to bless the amateur for the welcome relief accorded him, as, although actors are generous in the extreme, it is often

impossible to relieve all deserving applicants ; and, in those cases, recourse is had to the liberal and freely-offered donations of the general and amateur public.

There seems to be no line of debateable ground between the two sects, except perhaps the Playgoers' Club and a few similar associations, so that the boundary is really cleared at one leap ; the amateur, on attaining the legitimate stage, being welcome to all professional privileges.

The fact that but few professionals undertake amateur tuition, is accountable for the circumstance that little intercourse is formed at a point where mutual sociability might reasonably be expected ; and that the Church and Stage Guild has utterly failed to clothe the statue of Momus in the vestments of religion, is a significant proof that the association should never have been founded.

For, who wishes our clergy to scramble at the stage doors on the Saturday evening ;—the bishops fuming at the stall, and the curates perspiring at the pit entrance ;—and, a few hours later, to behold a neat and trim procession of ballet-girls and choristers wending their way to the sacred edifice ?

That the actress and actor should be truly Christian people, and that true religion is not incompatible with the histrionic art, I cheerfully admit ; but although wishing them the unhypocritical possession of Christianity, I can hardly think that this most desirable of ends is to be effected through the agency of an association where the clergy toady the actors and spoon the actresses, and where the players only visit the place from motives of curiosity, and forsake it disgusted and unrefreshed.

Amateurs lately have made a step in the right direction by engaging professional ladies, who are "resting," as exponents of their principal female parts. As before remarked, amateur plays often fall through from the want of an efficient "leading lady"; but

when a real live actress is laid on for the occasion, it is wonderful what a stimulus it gives to the merits of the piece, both by the individual herself and by the friendly rivalry that her presence creates among the others.

Occasionally too, it is pleasant to remark how freely the services of professionals are given at concerts organised on behalf of the funds of some deserving charity. Indeed, none are so free with their time and money on behalf of deserving institutions, as the good-natured Bohemians and Bohemiennes who throng the stages of the English-speaking race. Let all efforts at mutual assistance be strongly encouraged and widely supported, and we shall prosper alike the cause of those that are, and those that are to be, the constellations of the dramatic firmament.

APPLAUSE IN RELATION TO THE ENCORE.

CH I

AS a hardened playgoer, I may, perhaps, again venture—with my characteristic modesty—to touch on the above subject.

It is not only unjust, but also cruel, in the audience (whether of the stalls or upper gallery) not to applaud when applause is deserved. The artiste cannot gauge (unless it be instinctively) the minds of those before him and tell if his efforts are appreciated. It is true that the entertainer has seldom time to study the audience, but when he *does* do so, and is fronted by a few hundred cold, unsympathetic eyes, it is liable to disturb his equanimity and to render him nervous and hesitating for the remainder of the evening, unless he be stimulated by applause unexpectedly; then, indeed, he feels he has the "go" in him, and may recover himself unknowingly. There are, however, many lights under which applause should be studied, but wherever merited—even in a stout Juliet—it should be unhesitatingly accorded.

Many writers speak of "discriminating applause." That is the very "missing link" that authors and actors require. The applause given is, in many cases, due to the genius of the author and not to the actor. Of course, this can be reversed. Many a first-rate actor can make a lame and impotent sentence "tell." Thus the audience should endeavour to discriminate by their applause, as to whom—author or actor—they render their tribute. Of course, in every part of every house—stalls and private boxes by no means excepted

—there are people who could not, for the life of them, discriminate. A “fetching” face and figure they will do homage to, but as to discriminating between natural (?) and elocutionary charms—*c’est impossible !* The old hands sometimes acquire a *sang froid* and imperturbable demeanour which *débutantes* do well to try and imitate. But it is hard to persevere with a part when you have no acknowledgment that you are doing well. The soft sex (and, with Nellie Farren, I say, “Bless the soft sex !”) seem less penetrable than men in this respect. Probably because men have neither the same grace of carriage nor facility of expression—*i.e.*, are more liable to render themselves ridiculous.

I am afraid I am not well-bred ; I never shall be ! I have even gone to the length, often in the stalls and twice in a private box, of applauding so vigorously that some person or persons unknown have suggested (audibly) the desirability of my immediate removal from the premises. (N.B.—The aforesaid removal in either instance did not take place, although in each case I continued discriminately applauding, regardless of my increasing popularity in the dissenting quarter.)

So much on the side of actors and authors. Now for the audience. Only well-seasoned playgoers can adequately enjoy (?) a dull play or a *matinée*, or, worse than either, a *débutante* concert ; for a heavy afternoon performance, with long waits, longer recitations, telegrams from artists who were to appear, but who suddenly find themselves afflicted with colds in their heads, and a scene or two thrown in here and there to make up the two hours, foreshadows, in a house often half empty, the pains of the—blessed. The question arises, can such beings applaud ? The same remarks apply to most amateur theatricals, where most likely—taking Sheridan’s *School for Scandal* as an instance—Sir Peter is personated by some hapless, knock-kneed youth, and her ladyship by his mother, a

somewhat *passée* female of herculean dimensions. Again, what amount of applause constitutes the right to take "a call"? Some misguided individuals rush on and bow as soon as they hear their "kind friends in front" commencing to dispose of their superfluous breath. Generally speaking, the applause should be sustained for at least ten seconds to justify a re-appearance. The applause for an encore should last at least half a minute, before the desired repetition is granted; unless the approbation be so immediately decisive, as to allow of no denial or pretence of reluctance.

As a rule, the British Public is fairly discriminating and allows the better items to receive their fair share of recognition; and it is to this that we owe the almost entire absence of *claquers*, and that we also miss the exertions of the friendly *clique*, whose presence is such a blot on the continental playhouse.

Two minor exceptions may be casually mentioned. The English custom permits all people employed in the theatre—such as programme-sellers, barmaids, waiters, pages and cloak-room ladies—to make an awful row at every possible line, where demonstrations can be interjected; and it also sanctions the distribution of paper to such an extent, that the applause often comes from a sect of people who otherwise would be unable to patronise a high-class entertainment and who evince their gratitude for being smuggled in by applauding in a noisy, ostentatious manner on every conceivable occasion.

But, generally speaking, performers can rely upon a fair reception from a British audience, and if only the vapid, gilded youth of the boxes and stalls could be convinced that a little manual exercise in the shape of hand-clapping would be neither derogatory to their dignity, nor hurtful to their physical system, the profession might rely upon a completely honest and discriminating critique of every impersonation, in the nature of its applause.

THE BEAUTIES OF THE BALLET.

I AM unable to state, with the positive accuracy which the importance of the subject demands, who was the first ballet-girl, and to give the necessary particulars of her parentage and development.

There seems to be little doubt but that the Japanese invented ballet-girls—as they did everything else—several centuries before the Christian era. The Japanese ballet, as handed down from posterity and known by the name of Miyako-Odori, consists of 32 young and tender maidens, of between 15 and 17, who sway and chant to a symphonic row evoked by several unearthly-looking instruments.

This sort of thing goes on for a considerable time until at last the maikos—or ballet-girls—toddle off as gracefully as they toddled on. The Chinese whirl about and yell at each other, much as did the Cingalese people, (hereinafter mentioned); and, with a view of toning-down the walk-round and yelling-business, several non-performers whack tom-toms and kindred instruments with delightful assiduity.

Then there is the prima ballerina exemplified in the Indian *nautch* girl, and, coming down the ages, we arrive in about the 14th century to the Italians, who seem to have put the performance into shape and greatly added to its original beauties.

The modern ballet is amusingly elastic. I have seen a country ballet of five, a town ballet of eight and an Italian ballet of more than 200 *premières* and *premiers*, *coryphées* and *coryphés*, genies, songsters of glory, boatmen, villagers, musicians, postilions, Asiatics, and other uncanny creatures too numerous to mention. Then we have the modern Alhambra and Aquarium ballets, and the picturesque *ensembles* and dance-figures in the theatres, which almost deserve the name of ballet by themselves. Then the Paris ballets, employing sometimes 500 people—especially at the Eden Theatre,—deserve special mention. And what playgoer does not delight in the allegorical ballets and the flowing draperies of the Roman era? George R. Sims has somewhere said that all stage-ladies, who are not actresses, are ballet-girls to the untutored mind. What a vast number there are to take a census of, and yet every dramatic editor will expect you to know the real parentage, age and complexion of every girl in the "stock" at the Alhambra, Drury Lane, Gaiety, Savoy and Aquarium! Such knowledge is absolutely necessary, as it is by no means rare for one of D'Oyley Carte's or Hollingshead's front-row ladies, to leap from the utterance of W. S. Gilbert's satirical lines, to the fashionable platitudes of May Fair and the society of Belgravia; in other words, to desert "father's cab," for the altar at St. George's, Hanover Square, and the palatial mansion in Tyburnia.

On such truly gay and festive occasions, the journalist is expected to come out strong in the pedigree line and the moral ills that flesh is heir to, and to veritably rake in the slush and filth for tainted morsels of intelligence. The good in an actress is useless to the contemporary writer, who, to tickle the loathsome palate of a certain class of degraded playgoers, must pile up the agony, in order that the reader may congratulate himself upon his comparative morality. The hard and bitter struggle to keep aged parents, the

heroic self-denial to do a good turn to those even more necessitous, the nursing of the sick and the feeding of the hungry—all these are cast aside, that the hasty word and the half-uttered sentence may be shown in strong relief and expatiated upon, by a hater of his kind, and a disciple of the intensely Zolæesque.

Let such remember that the ballet-girl, fragile and graceful though she be, is but a human being, with all the appertaining faults and foibles, and one of a class that, despite calumny and temptation, contains many of the truest and noblest examples of British Womanhood.

THE SCIENCE OF ACTING.

THE Histrionic Art has so long been confined by public opinion to the sphere of art alone, that all attempts to prove this eccentric idea erroneous, have signally failed.

But to the true actor, there is a science in his beloved study, and there are scientific principles involved in the actual rehearsal and performance of his part.

There is no science in the actor when his repertoire—in the comedian—is confined to a paralytic jerk of the elbow and a ridiculous facial contortion ; or—in the tragedian—to a forced walk or peculiar intonation. That is, of course, when the same gestures and vocal eccentricities extend to all the artist's characters and thus become a fixture, as it were, in the professional stock in trade.

An actor, to be great, must be fecund and versatile ; and no artist can truly boast that he understands and appreciates the science of acting, whose individuality is distinctly recognised in every one of his impersonations. There are people now on the stage, who have graduated from the music hall, but who yet retain the same old gibes and antics, which comprise their sole talent.

Could there be any doubt as to the pre-eminence of Henry Irving in the Dramatic Art, it would speedily be removed merely by contrasting the great actor's appearance as the vivacious Jeremy Diddler following the gloomy and conscience-curst Mathias ; or as the fertile Jingle succeeding the sublimely hellish impersonation of Mephistopheles.

Then, again, the finesse of such actors as E. S. Willard and H. Beerbohm Tree is apparent in their scientific treatment of the several characters.

The E. S. Willard of the classical conceptions at the "Princesses" and the E. S. Willard in the title role of "Jim, the Penman" are not recognizable; and the same may be said of H. Beerbohm Tree as Prince Zabouroff and the Baron Hardtfeld.

The difference between scientific and unscientific methods may be briefly stated thus:—That science aims at realism, while false art strives for "effects." Many actors will lower their social status and will perform the most degrading buffooneries on the stage, and for what?—For applause; to produce an "effect"!

When it can be truly stated that the one character of an actor is totally eradicated and replaced by another, equally artistic, then, indeed, may we exclaim, "This is the actor's art, the science of acting."

To further illustrate this statement I will cite Misses Ellen Terry, E. Farren, Marion Hood and Florence St. John; and Messrs. Fred Leslie, Hayden Coffin and Arthur Roberts. Of the fair sex, Misses Ellen Terry and Farren, and, of the sterner sex, Mr. Fred Leslie alone, show their aptitude and resource by losing their personalities and identifying themselves with their studies, whether in the higher domain of Shakespeare, or the somewhat secular Sacred Lamp of Burlesque. On the contrary, Miss Marion Hood is always the same charming Miss Marion Hood, whether in "Dorothy," "Little Jack Sheppard" or "Monte Christo, Junior;" the personality of the vivacious Florence St. John remains unchanged; Mr. Arthur Roberts is the same Mr. Arthur Roberts who used to patter so agreeably on the music hall stage, and Mr. Hayden Coffin preserves his individuality and also, thank goodness, his voice.

As I don't want to run through a list of gasping

Garricks and models of mediocrity, I happily refrain from pursuing this train of argument.

Mr. Fred Leslie, however, is an artist whose talents, asserting themselves on the boards of the Alhambra, and gaining strength in the characters of Rip Van Winkle and Jonathan Wild, have ripened into the perfections of mimicry and volatile conception now delighting the Gaiety *superchics*, and which bid fair to reach a level seldom attained by so young an actor ; whose male equal in burlesque it would be impossible, excepting Edward Terry, to produce.

The actor, with scientific principles, with mental study and with natural aptitude, has placed himself on a pedestal, in this nineteenth century, never mounted by previous players ; notwithstanding the assertions of pessimists to the contrary.

The great, the besetting sin of our modern actor, and which is generally encouraged by the author's MS., is the over-anxiety to "make points," to score somehow and to obtain applause anyhow, in defiance of science, art and all established rules and regulations.

Then, the truthful adage that the actor's art in a hard and unyielding taskmaster, is unhesitatingly violated ; all traditions are cast to the winds, and the popular player throws off all restraint and plays not to the cultured, the æsthetic and the refined, but to the "gods" in the gallery and their attendant nymphs. A Frenchman observed, at the close of one of our performances, consisting mainly of an elephant, a fire, three dromedaries, a waterfall with real water, a railway-collision, a couple of camels and a fire escape :—"It is very fine, but is not the play !" So it is with modern buffoonery, with the exception that the latter is anything but fine, as it is degrading, pandering and utterly unworthy of the reputation of English Actors and the study of the Science of Acting.

HAGENBECK'S CEYLON EXHIBITION.

MONDAY, July 12th, 1886. Just returned from the "Ceylon Exhibition" at the Agricultural Hall. To quote the Reverend Spalding, "Do you know" I hesitate whether an "Exhibition" article is admissible in the *D. R.* However, I decide to write and "chance it." Why? 1st, As a nightcap before retiring to my virtuous couch; 2nd, to partially revenge myself for the fact that I was one and three-quarter hours "on the move," trying to find one—only one—seat out of the 3,000 free ditto advertised; and 3rd, from the perverse nature of my mental faculties, to ascertain whether or no the Editor of this paper *does* allow articles on Exhibitions. As I have now relieved myself by stating *why* I write, I start to "do" the Exhibition, as I attempted to "do" the South Kensington shows, until I had to give it up!—systematically.

Missing (through inability similar to that of Mr. Weller, jun., who found it impossible to exercise his visual organs upon objects with "deal doors interwening") the 1st and 2nd items, namely—"Drum-beaters," and "Potdancers"—two ee's, please, Mr. Printer, for it is thusly inserted in the programme—I beguiled the tedium of the progress of Item 3 (Elephants carrying wood), by commencing—also systematically—my search for the 3,000 free seats.

Alighting in the Blue Section I was, more or less,

politely informed by the several officials that the seats there were one shilling. Repulsed, I ascended the staircase only to find that the fee for occupation of seats in the gallery was 6d. Still thirsting after Truth—the finding of the advertised 3,000—I descended and made for the other side of the building, when I literally staggered to find that *those* seats were 2s. 6d. N.B.—There are no notices indicating the locality of the free seats—which I finally ascertained are the highest in the gallery. Partially collapsing on hearing that the seats last inquired for were half-a-crown, I unsteadily wobbled during Item 4 (Devil Dancers, dancing, singing, and playing on oodaccees) to the back of the “property” Indian Gateway, which, opening in the middle, admitted my attenuated form and the forms of half a dozen others, attenuated and otherwise, into the arena, from whence we were dislodged by a gentleman in uniform, by the exercise of a somewhat uncertain language—perhaps one of the Universal languages now being promulgated—and some elementary, though forcible, illustrative gestures. Again cast adrift, I recklessly sandwiched myself between layers of spectators—more or less refined—but soon gave that up, extricating myself with great ingenuity, and planting myself finally beneath a balcony tenanted by two dusky Ceylonese Hebes in their native dress, or rather undress. In such delightful company, I managed to somehow witness “Women playing on a large, flat drum”—ladies, prithee, get a sponge-bath, and hammer same with the palms of your hands, through all the gradations of the Italian musical scale—stick-dancers, jugglers, a short snake charming performance with what I believe were cobra di capellos, and more feats with logs by elephants. Then came Item 10, which was tersely described on the programme as “Music.” The “music” reminds one muchly of the sensational passages in the Indian portion of *Round the World*, and the Hariah dance.

As reviewers now generally offer the orchestra advice, under the impression that they (the reviewers) understand more about music than the conductors, I cannot refrain from saying that the big drum—which is attended to by a swarthy demon with forbidding profile—is too harsh and grating, and the cymbals are similarly objectionable. Could some sweetness be diffused into both the instruments referred to, the public would have cause to rejoice. After the “music,” being apprehensive of an encore, I left the orchestra, silently anathematising the drum-and-cymbals satyr, and descended, mixing with the bestial ‘lot” (*vide* the Rev. Compton Reade) in the body of the hall. *Apropos* of the Reverend gentleman’s “lot,” I must say that—as recently similarly complained of, *re* the Colonial and Indian natives at South Kensington—the behaviour of some of the “lower classes” were such as would inspire no rational Ceylonese with admiration at the perfection of civilisation to which English natives have been brought, either in the selection of classical garb with which to clothe their remarks, or in the indulgence of the heaven-born deportment with which we are sometimes credited. It is certain that the conduct of some of the “visitors” was deplorable in the extreme.

The Editor of the *Dramatic Review* is but mortal man, so I am awfully uncertain as to whether this will ever see the light—it is but human to err! *Revenons à nos moutons*. Item II. “Jugglers fencing with swords and sticks,” consisting of two gentlemen energetically “going for” each other with long sticks grasped with both hands, and one gentleman brandishing a combined steel gauntlet and sword of most astonishing flexibility, the blade of which had been wonderfully tempered, with such energy that he seemed literally encircled with fire, and I nearly committed myself by audibly rendering thanks that the hero was nowhere near the audience in the case of a

"smash." The same gentleman afterwards performed with a pole, to the extremities of which two flaming dependencies were attached ; and, after having twisted them round for a few seconds and got comfortably suffocated, withdrew. More devil-dancing, and then a portion of the Tamil comedy, called the *Arichandria Nadogau*, rendered by Tamil actors was presented, and of which the principal feature seems to be that the performers indulge in a comic walk-round, almost incessantly. A venerable-looking old patriarch in the comedy wears a head-dress, compared to which that of Miss Rorke in "Sophia," is absolutely microscopical. After Item 14, Racing with zebras "in carts called hackaries,"—compared to which costermongers' dwarf Neddies in carts called "carts" are nowhere—we had more elephant-drill, succeeded by personal adjournment to report on quality of refreshments vended. Coming back entirely renovated, I was just in time to witness "Jugglers wrestling," which, considering the performance was on the soil and not on the platform, and the combatants the same colour as the soil, and, considering also, that the "rounds" comprised a good deal of circuitous "sparring," the whole made up such an awfully mystifying set-to that I won't venture to describe it. Two dwarfs, both under three feet in height, succeeded an acrobatic monkey whose caste I was unfortunately unable to determine, and the "chorus" (?) of "God save the Queen" was rendered by the lady dwarf in a style that was characterised by unmistakable individuality. The sight of Item 20, "The Great Perra-Harra Procession," in which all the elephants, zebus, etc., were trotted out, was alone worth a visit ; the elephants' trappings, hackaries, native carts, combined with attendants, women with oodaccees, men with painted sticks, etc., and preceded by a hoary individual on stilts, all in their "Sunday clothes," made up a most picturesque, satisfying, and national finale. Passing out through the large hall

and inspecting a host of devil-masks, temple-requisites, and medicine and other shops, I came to several framed photos, illustrative, presumably, of native scenery, one of which was described—in the New Universal Language (?)—"Tempel-Ruine." Collapsing, I rushed forth, only to be presented by an innocent-looking youth with a scrap of paper purporting to be an "Admit two to PRT, Sadler's Wells Theatre," and the slight exertion of partially carpeting the pavement with the fragmentary evidence of the generosity of the philanthropic John Ward, finally removed me from the portals of "Carl Hagenbeck's Ceylonese Exhibition."

L'ENVOI.

IN concluding this short series of papers, it may not be inappropriate to consider the drama, along with the British Matron, in a moral sense.

The play, properly worked, is an admirable tonic for the enervated mind. We have the film torn from our eyes and behold society other than that we move in, and we see the good and evil simultaneously presented and inextricably interwoven. It remains, therefore, for the playgoer to point his own moral and digest his own lesson.

In the show pieces, consisting mainly of bare limbs and painted flesh, it is hard to find anything worthy of appreciation; but in even these, the philosopher is able to find food for reflection and profound study.

In these days, realism is to be strongly advocated, and the sooner every man knows his neighbour the better for him. It is useless to shudder and to turn away from the spectacle, simply because it is disagreeable to the sight. It is necessary and right that it should be seen, and that we should no longer wrap ourselves warmly and comfortably and protest to outsiders that it is not cold.

In the restrictions of Society, it is as impossible for its gilded lambs to wander into foul hovels and peer into loathsome recesses, as it is for the habituated

slummite to realise the sumptuous luxury and artistic epicurism with which the rich are surrounded. On the stage, however, both are equal, and all classes gain proportionately by the revelation.

As there are clergymen deliberately steering for the wrong side of Jordan, so there are actors who work incalculable evil and who lower and disgrace the name of the drama in the eyes of its moderate patrons.

The Stage conveys the lesson of a Living Book ; and as that book is written, so must its tenets and arguments be for the better or worse, and the lessons deduced, be useful or the contrary ; allowing adequately for the varied natures of its critics.

As, after this, it may be necessary for me to affirm that I am NOT an Exeter Hall *habitué* in disguise, I take this opportunity of contradicting the possible supposition, and of courteously and gratefully bidding farewell to the reader, who has glanced through these few pages, and who, in the language of the patent-medicine advertisements, "STILL LIVES."

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